SERMONS

PREACHED ON

Several Occasions.

SHEWING,

1. The Saints Relief in time of EXIGENCY.
2. The Admirableness of Divine Providence.
3. A Prisoner at Liberty, and his Judge in Bonds.
4. The most Remarkable Man Upon Earth, or *The true Portraicture of a SAINT.*

By *SAMUEL BLACKERBY*, Minister of the Gospel, at *Stow Market.*

LONDON,
Printed for *Nevil Simmons*, at the *Princes Arms* in S. *Paul's Church Yard.* 1674.

2

To the Worſhipful

THOMAS BLACKERBY,

Eſquire.

My honoured Patron, and Kinſman, with His honoured Conſort

Mrs *KATHERINE BLACKERBY.*

Much Honoured,

THoſe that know my Relation to you, the Intereſt that you have in this place, and thoſe Obligations, which your Kindneſſes to my ſelf and Family, have laid upon me, will not wonder at the Dedication of my firſt fruits of Printing to you. You were the Inſtruments (under God) of my removal from a forraign County to this place, where moſt of theſe Sermons (which are now expoſed to publick view) were preached: Under your Patronage and Wing, have I now lived (for the ſpace of above ten years, in many reſpects) a comfortable, and pleaſurable life.

For here I have enjoyed a large opportunity of Preaching, in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon, the glad tidings of Peace, and the Goſpel of Salvation. For (through Grace) I can ſay it, that I prize my Liberty (in this reſpect) above the Living, and my Work (though hard to fleſh and bloud) above any worldly advantage. Here I have ſeen the goings of God, yea, power and glory in the Sanctuary. Here ſome have been enlightned, convinced, and awakened out of a dead ſleep; and others ſtrengthened to run the Chriſtian Race, that is ſet before them. Here are broken Reeds, and ſmoaking Flax; yea, here are ſome newly planted in the houſe of the Lord, who (I hope) will flouriſh in the Courts of our God. So that I make no queſtion, but many do at this day, ſound forth the praiſes of God, for guiding and diſpoſing of your Heart, to take care of this great place. You opened the door, and the Lord hath made it effectual. You ſent an Earthen Veſſel hither, and the excellency of the power hath been of God, let him have all the glory. *Not unto us, not unto us; But unto thy Name, O Lord, be the praiſe.* But, O dear Sir, Do you account it your Honour to be uſed ſtill as an Inſtrument (under

(under God) of doing good, and of being made ſerviceable to his Church, in your Stations; that the Children unborn may bleſs the Lord for you. This is the way to eternize your Name, to draw down Heavens bleſſing upon your Perſon and Eſtate; yea, to attain the happineſs, and comfort of Soul-raviſhing ſmiles, from the well-pleaſed face of the great Majeſty of Heaven. Go on and proſper, let your laſt works be as good, if not better then your firſt; and in all, encourage your ſelf in the Lord your God. My firſt Subject now Printed, tells you, that when your Fleſh and Heart fails you, God will be your ſtrength; and I hope your own experience bears witneſs thereunto. That truſt that was committed to you, when you was made High Sheriff of the County of *Suffolk:* The great loſs that you ſuſtained by the Fire, in the Metropolis of our Nation, together with other remarkable loſſes, and charges at the ſame time, did require a more then ordinary influence for your ſupport and relief: But I am well aſſured, that the chearfulneſs of your Countenance, and wiſe conduct of your Affairs, under thoſe heavie preſſures and burdens, ſpeak forth no-

thing leſs then a divine ſupport, and ſeaſonable relief. But to my Labours upon *Pſal.* 73. 26. I have added that Sermon which I preached upon your requeſt at the Aſſizes holden at *Bury* St. *Edmunds*, *March* 27. 1669. And all I do now dedicate to you, as a Teſtimony of my thankfulneſs for thoſe many Kindneſſes, which you have conferr'd upon me. However, by this Inſcription, the Book is become yours, with this humble and hearty deſire, that it may not only receive grace and favour from you, but that by your diligent peruſal thereof, you may receive Grace from it. So prayes

Your moſt obliged

Kinſman and Servant,

Samuel Blackerby.

Stow-Market *Decemb.* 2. 1673.

TO

TO THE
READER.

Courteous Reader,

I *Would be ſorry the luxuriancy of the Preſs, ſhould cloy thy Stomack, to take off thy Eye from a through review of this profitable Treatiſe, here commended to thee: The Reverend Author whereof, did not calculate the greateſt part of it, for any other Meridian then his own Paſtoral charge; and there it had lien without expoſing it to the Cenſure of critical eyes, had not the importunity of Friends prevailed ſo far with him, as to afford it a Midwife to bring it into the world. I had the happy advantage to be an Auditor of ſome of the Sermons, wherein I obſerved ſuch Spiritual Solidity, that what I then wiſhed, I now obtain; the publication of ſuch elaborate exerciſes, for the common good. I am not ignorant of the bleſſing of a Pulpit Diſpenſation, accompanied with the guſts and gales of Gods Spirit: Yet it is pity ſuch a Jewel ſhould be a Pendant on the Ear, without the priviledge of a Preſs, to leave an impreſſion*

upon the Heart; Grapes that have paſt the Preſs, cannot but have a moſt delicious reliſh. Hereby this Reverend Author living near, in the Hearts and Affections of his People, who have given him no ſmall encouragement, by their proficiency under his Miniſtry, may abide with them after his tranſlation hence; and the Name of Blackerby, *both in his worthy Father and Son, may like a box of Spikenard, perfume their memorial, when this Servant of God is gone, following his Father to receive a Crown, the reward of his unwearied Work. The Author of this Treatiſe, hath (like his Maſter) been a man acquainted with infirmities, exerciſed divers years, under bodily preſſures, and thereby becomes the more fit by his own experience, to commend to a gracious Soul, Divine Relief, in the deficiency of Animal Spirits, and to teach a Soul how to lean upon her Beloved, coming out of the Wilderneſs,* Cant. 8. 5. *I have ſeen him divers times in the Pulpit, when he had more need to have been in his Bed, ſeeming to me, reduced almoſt into his Socket, having ſpent his Lamp in giving light to others; yet Divine Relief hath carried him through his Work, with a revival of him, and the Hearts of many under his Charge, ſo as he may ſay with the Apoſtle;* When I am weak, then am I ſtrong, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. The joy of the Lord being his ſtrength, *Nehem.* 8. 10.

For his way of Preaching, I am well acquainted with it, he is not ambitious of that which ſome call the Knack of Preaching; to ſtart ſome ſpruce Notion, or crop the flowers of Elegancy. This is not his vein, or ought to be thy work: But his dexterity lies in that which Luther *terms the right Art of*

Preaching,

Preaching, to hold forth Jeſus Chriſt, and free Grace in a ſearching way, that his people may learn to ſwim to Heaven in a Goſpel Channel. I dare aſſure thee (Reader) if thou ſhalt peruſe this Treatiſe, not curſorily, but with a ſerious and judicious eye, thou wilt find enough, not only to exerciſe thy Head, but to recreate thy Heart. So as thou mayſt name this Work, as Lamech *did his Son* Noah, *Gen. 5. 29. This ſhall comfort us concerning the work of our hands, when others are exerciſed (in this Angry Age) in reading of Polemicks, the product of their Animoſities, by reading this Treatiſe, thou mayſt retire, like an* Anima Seperata, *into thy boſom, and view the complexion of thy own Soul, and ſee what need thou haſt of Divine Relief, in all thy Exigencies, and Ark thy ſelf within Gods Pavilion in a cloudy day. I will detain thee (Reader) no longer from ſatiating thy ſelf, with Balm from* Gilead *in the enſuing Work; deſiring the God of Grace and Mercy to bleſs the Labours and Endeavours of his faithful Servant, to the good of many precious Souls in this our* Iſrael.

Thine to ſerve thee in our dear
Lord Jeſus Chriſt,

Thomas Holborough,

Some time Rector of *Battisford.*

TO

TO THE

READER.

READER,

THE *Life even of the beſt men is ſhort, the ſtrength of that Life is much ſhorter, and the actual emprovement of that ſtrength, muſt be acknowledged to have yet a leſs proportion: The moſt painful and faithful Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, while they are ſpeaking unto others, are ſpending themſelves, and when they have ſerved a while, their Generation fall aſleep: But good mens deſires to be ſerviceable to God and his Church, are of a larger meaſure, they exceed their actings, ſtrength and life; as an expreſſion whereof they ſometimes make their Labours ſurvive their Perſons, and give a more permanent exiſtence to their tranſient words, that being dead, they may yet ſpeak, and be read, when not heard,* (Heb. 11. 4.) *Haſt thou ſo much charity, as to judge this to be the reaſon, thou haſt, wherewith to excuſe in great meaſure, the common offence of the abound-*

ing

ing Preſs. It will be no diſhonour to the many worthy Servants of God in the Goſpel of his Son, whoſe extant works remain to the Church, to relate among their number the Reverend Author of the following Diſcourſes. Though the inſtance of a degenerating poſterity be too many, yet God hath not left himſelf without ſufficient witneſs to prove the faithfulneſs of his holy Covenant, The Generation of the upright ſhall be bleſſed, (*Pſal.* 112. 2.) The juſt mans children are bleſſed after him, (*Prov.* 20. 7.) *Mr.* Richard Blackerby, *the Reverend Father of the Author, was none of the leaſt Names in the Church of God, in his Generation, the powerful and ſucceſsful Inſtrument of the Spirit of God for the ſaving of Souls: To him God gave (what* Abſalom *had not) a Son, even this Son, to keep his Name in remembrance, in honourable remembrance, that in a gracious Son, that Divine Word might have its fuller accompliſhment to a gracious Father.* The memory of the juſt is bleſſed, (Prov. 10. 7.) *We doubt not to ſay, with reſpect to the preſent Age, that he hath been, is, and we hope yet ſhall be a ſingular Bleſſing to a very great Congregation. Conſiderable as for its number, ſo eſpecially for the many ſerious and ſober Chriſtians that are found therein. Over which, after a few years intervening, the providence of God happily placed him, in ſucceſſion to the Reverend, Learned, Orthodox, Prudent, and Holy* Dr. Young. *Where, by the ſpace of ten years (not without difficulty, through much weakneſs and infirmity of body) by ſound Doctrine, and good Converſation, he hath ſucceſsfully built upon the happy Foundation, which was before laid. The Neighbourhood*

bood in the mean time gladly partaking with his own people of his weekly Lectures. Thoſe little things, which ſome ſo zealouſly contend for; as they are not the matter of his Preaching, ſo neither are they matter of difference between him and other good men, therein diſſenting from him. The truth of Doctrine, power of Godlineſs, Real and Spiritual Religion, as it is the ſubject, deſign, and buſineſs of his Miniſtry; ſo is it the object of his affection and honour where-ever he ſeeth it, the delight and pleaſure of his converſe, where-ever he meets it. He that hath no worſe deſigns upon others, may go abroad with danger or offence to none. He that hath no worſe reſpects for others, when abroad, may expect reception and entertainment from all. Mayſt thou reap the benefit which he deſigns, thou wilt pay thy reſpects due to him, and thy thanks due to God for him, which is the hearty wiſh of

The Authors unworthy Brethren,

Richard Jennings, ſome time
Rector of *Combes*.

John Fairfax, ſometime Rector of *Barking*.

ERRATA.

PAge 4. l. 11. for but is, r. but God is. p. 10. l. 3. for ſtrength, r. ſtrengthen. p. 16. l. 14. for earns, r. yearns. p. 22. l. 8. for leads me ſome, r. leads me to ſome. p. 23. l. 13. for Judg. 10. r. Judg. 20. p. 42. l. 9. for ſubline, r. ſublime. p. 54. l. 27. for not all, r. not in all. p. 66. l. 32. for ſome ſay, r. ſome may ſay. p. 86. l. 21. for hands, r. heart. p. 126. l. 11. for clean for ever, r. clean gone for ever. p. 146. l. 20. for Jacob, r. Joſeph. p. 172. l. 29. for ſubſtructio, r. ſubſtractio. p. 177. l. 14. for it, r. is. p. 182. l. 21. for peac, r. peace. p. 206. l. 10. for Maziſtratus, r. Maziſtratu. p. 210. l. 21. for prevent, r. pervert. p. 211. l. 9. for bone, r. been. p. 216. l. 31. for ring, r. reign.

TO MY DEAR

Pariſhioners,

And beloved Neighbours in the Burrough of *Stow-Market*, and *Stow-Upland*.

Gentlemen, and Neighbours.

I Read of a Creature, which Hiſtorians call ἡμερόβιον, One days life, dead as ſoon as bred: And certainly that Title may be given to many Sermons, whoſe breeding have coſt more time, then their life amounts to. Several daies for their Conception, ſome conſiderable time for their Birth; but die, as faſt as they are brought forth, at the lips of the Preacher: For as they go in at one Ear of ſome Hearers, they go out at the other. And this (I conceive) is one ground of printing Sermons, that there may be a Reſurrection of the Dead. And that that which made no impreſſion upon the Heart, when tendered to the Ear, may (through Divine Bleſſing) be conveyed to the Mind (by being preſented to the Eye)

Eye) and take up its lodging, and live there.

'Tis now many years ſince I preached the Sermons, that have the precedency in this little Piece, which I now offer to your peruſal: And I am afraid, that (as to ſome) they are dead, yea, buried in the grave of forgetfulneſs, and are, as if they had never been preached. Upon this, and ſome other Conſiderations, am I overcome, to do that now, which (formerly) I thought, none ſhould ever have had ſuch an influence upon me, as to prevail with me to attempt.

I have been informed, that the preaching of them was very grateful unto ſpiritual pallates; and that doth incourage me to hope, that the Printing, and Reading of them, will be ſo too.

You have them, and the reſt, Printed as they were ſtudied and penn'd, but I cannot ſay, as they were preached. The Matter is the ſame; I, but they may want ſomething of their heat and life; unleſs a diligent reading of them be attended with the Spirit of Life.

As the Subjects are various, ſo various motives, and impreſſions upon my Spirit, put me upon preaching of them at *Stow*.

And

And in all, I hope, I was under a Divine Conduct. For,

1. When I perceived my Miniſterial Labours and Employment were neceſſarily augmented, and did exceed my firſt engagement and expectation, my Fleſh and my Heart began to fail: So that I was ready to ſay with the Apoſtle, *Who is ſufficient for theſe things?* and therefore could not fix upon a Text in all the Book of God, more ſuitable then *Pſal.* 73. 26. both to my ſelf, and alſo to others, who (at that time) had their failings of Fleſh, and Heart alſo.

2. When I had experienced the power and preſence of God with me, ſo that the Hearts of many, both in the Town and Countrey, ſeemed to be knit to me upon a Spiritual account; I was then throughly convinced, that it was the Wheel within the Wheel that brought me hither, and therefore made choice of *Ezekiels* Viſion of the Wheels, or the Myſtery of Divine Providence, as a fit Subject to treat of in this place: And afterwards, contracted the chief of the matter (contained in many Sermons) into a narrower compaſs, and preached it in a more eminent place.

I am not altogether inſenſible, that this precious

precious Liquor broached, and drawn forth in ſtudying and preaching, hath paſſed through an impure Pipe: This Heavenly Treaſure hath been put into an Earthen Veſſel, and therefore may have received ſome hurt and detriment; yea, have a taſte thereof. But I hope, that the ſenſe of your own imperfections, and failures in ſpiritual undertakings (for we are all as an unclean thing, and our Righteouſneſs as filthy rags) will be an effectual enducement to you, to plead with God on my behalf, that what is mine therein, may be pardoned, and on your own behalf, that what is his, he will ſo own, as to make it powerful upon your Spirits, whilſt you are reading and meditating thereon, in order to your preſent, and eternal advantage.

I bleſs the Lord for any fruits of my Labours in preaching among you, and if the Lord ſhall pleaſe to lengthen out my Life, to ſee an increaſe thereof by Printing, I ſhall ſay with *David*, *I will praiſe him yet more and more:* Yea, then I ſhall have gained my end in this New Work, and ſay with the Apoſtle in reference to both. *What is my crown and glory? are not even ye in the preſence of our Lord Jeſus?*

However,

However, Gods glory, your ſpiritual advantage, and publick ſervice to the Church, being the marks I aim at in this Undertaking. If I ſpend my ſtrength for nought, and in vain at preſent, yet ſurely, my Judgement is with the Lord, and my Work with my God; and when I am rotting in my grave, the Seed which hath been ſowing in *Stow* many years, may ſpring up and bring forth a plentiful and glorious harveſt. The Lord grant, that none of you do make it evident at the laſt, that you are either of the number of high-way hearers, thorny-ground, or ſtony-ground hearers. But that you all may be good-ground, fit and prepared to receive the Seed, that God hath yet to ſow among you, by the hands of his ſeeds-men; ſo that though they ſow in tears, yet at laſt, they may reap in joy. As for my ſelf, I ſhall not ceaſe to pray, yea, to beg the prayers of others, that the Goſpel may ſtill run and be glorified among you, that this Son of Light, Glory, and Grace, may never ſet upon you in a cloud, and that your glorious day of Gods viſitation in mercy, may not wind up in a dark, and dreadful night of darkneſs and deſolation.

I can do no leſs at preſent, then put you

in mind of, and publiſh, the kindneſs of God to you, and to my ſelf in you, for that diſtinguiſhing mercy of God, that is written upon *Sion*, in a very fair, and legible Character, even to the admiration of many that live near us; yea, to ſtrangers alſo, whoſe occaſions have invited and drawn them hither: inſomuch, that ſome very judicious perſons have expreſſed their Hearts to me, in theſe, and ſuch like words; *That there is ſcarce a Town to be found (in many miles diſtance) ſo eminently bleſſed, and that in many reſpects.* What they have ſaid upon Report, I ſhall now publiſh upon my own obſervation, and experience; and that in ſome particulars.

1. That there is ſo much Brotherly love and union of Heart among you, in order to Spiritual, and Evangelical ends, although ſome difference in Judgement, as to ſome Circumſtances.

2. That in the ſpace of almoſt eleven years, there hath not been one that profeſſed Godlineſs in the Town, that hath ſeparated from the publick preaching of the Word.

3. That when the Arrows of the Peſtilence flew thick round about us, God preſerved us.

4. That

4. That under your Peace and Liberty, you have wonderfully thriven, and proſpered in your worldly Eſtate; ſo that there is a new face upon the Town.

5. That God hath given you a more then ordinary Spirit of Zeal for his Glory, and of Charity towards the Souls of young ones in the Town: Witneſs the Agreement, and Subſcription of many of you, for the Education of poor Children; and a ſtrict obſervation of the Lords Day.

6. I muſt not forget your Kindneſs to my ſelf. And that,

1. In your Unanimity of Spirit to receive, entertain, and encourage me, at my firſt coming among you.

2. In your frequent Viſits, and Night-watchings with me, in my Sickneſſes, and ſore Afflictions.

3. But eſpecially in your daily remembrance of me, at the Throne of Grace; and conſtant attendance upon the Word preached in publick.

I have often ſaid it, that my Life hath been given in to the Prayers of my people. And let the Reader know, that I account it no ſmall favour and ſmile from Heaven, that I live among a praying people. Though all of them be not, yet many are.

Now (Gentlemen and Neighbours) for all these Favours, I return you my hearty thanks; and as a Testimonial thereof, I must tell the World, that I bless the Lord, for his providence in my Removal hither, and in continuing me thus long among you; and do not repent me of the hard Labour, Afflictions, Trials, and Temptations, which I have endured here. The Lord grant, that our mutual Love may not only continue, but increase, and that our winding up may be better then our beginning. For then shall we triumph in glory, and sing Halelujahs together, for ever and ever. For this end he shall not cease to pray for you, who is,

Your Servant in the

work of the Gospel,

Samuel Blackerby.

Stow-Market, Decemb. 2. 1673.

THE CONTENTS.

THe Introduction to the words of the Text. Page 1.

The Pſalmiſts two-fold Experiment, his Malady and Relief; a Demonſtration that God is good to Iſrael. 2

The Particulars contained in the Text, with the Obſervations raiſed from each Particular. 4

The firſt principal Doctrine. That God is the Rock of a Saints heart, ſtrength, and portion for ever. 5

Divided into two Branches. 6

The firſt branch, that God is the Rock of a Saints heart, ſtrength, proved by Scripture. ib.

Explained in three particulars. 1. *He is the Author and giver of all ſtrength.* 2. *He is the increaſer and perfecter of a Saints ſtrength.* 3. *He is the preſerver of a Saints ſtrength.* ib.

Six Poſitions, laid down by way of Demonſtration. 7

1. *All ſtrength is in God originally, and fully.* ib.
2. *The Iſrael of God, have a peculiar intereſt in the ſtrength of God.* 8
3. *According to the Saints communion with God, and Gods influence into them, ſuch is their ſtrength.* 9
4. *According to the fulneſs, and extent of Grace, promiſed in the Covenant of Grace, ſuch is Gods influence*

influence into the hearts of his people for their strength. 13

5. *According to that mutual Transact that is between God the Father, and his Son Christ Jesus, both on Gods part, and on the Believers part; so doth the Covenant give forth its vertue, and grace to the Believer.* 14

6. *According to the Spirits Revelation of this Grace in the Heart, such is our sense, and feeling thereof; and according to our sense, and feeling thereof, such is our comfort.* 18

Use of Instruction to all true Believers. 1. *To account God their strength.* 2. *To give God the glory of their strength.* 19

The second Branch of the first principal Doctrine. That God is Israels portion for ever, proved, and explained. 40

Demonstrated, by shewing how God comes to be a Saints portion. 44

The Use of Inference is in three particulars.

1. *That the people of God, are the richest people.* 52

2. *That the people of God, are a truly happy people.* 53

3. *That the people of God, cannot be made miserable.* ib.

The second Use is of Instruction, to teach us,

1. *Where to have a Portion for our selves, and ours.* 54

2. *That if we would have God to be our portion, we must be his.* 56

The third Use is of Direction, and Counsel to Gods Israel.

1. *To learn the distinction to the height, between God in himself, or God in the Creature, and the Creature*

Creature without God. 59
2. *To be content with ſuch things as they have.* 61
3. *Not to be ſolicitouſly, or diſtruſtfully careful, for what they want.* 62
4. *Above all, to be thankful for the enjoyment of God.* 63
The ſecond principal Doctrine. That Divine Relief flows from God to his people, according to their neceſſity. 64
The particular Caſes wherein a Chriſtian ſtands in need of Divine Relief, are failing of the Fleſh, and failing of the Heart. 65
Divine Relief flows in divers wayes, when the comforts of a mans life fails him. 66
Divine Relief flows in divers wayes, when the outward man fails. 75
Divine Relief flows in, when the Underſtanding fails. 87
When the Will fails. 94
When the Memory fails 102
Divine Relief flows in, when the infuſed habits fail. 110
God works four things for the Chriſtians good, by his decay in Grace, and falling into Sin. 114
1. *Hereby God diſcovers that corruption, that is in the Heart.* ib.
2. *Hereby God teaches the Soul, where its ſtrength lies.* 115
3. *The falls of Chriſtians, through the weakneſs of Grace, and the power of Sin, are made notable Antidotes, and Preſervatives, againſt final Apoſtacie.* ib.
4. *Theſe falls and decayes, ſettle him faſter, and make him root deeper in Chriſt.* 116

Four Cautions entered hereupon. 118
Divine Relief flows in, when the Animal Spirits fail, through Disappointment. 122
When they fail through the hiding of Gods face. 124
When they fail through a sense of Sin, and Gods displeasure for it. 128
When they fail through a sudden passion of fear. 132
When they fail through some strong temptation of Satan. 136
The Doctrine confirmed by three Reasons. The First, Taken from that near relation, that is between God, and good men. 140
The second, taken from Gods design, in all his peoples straights and necessities. 142
The third, taken from the beautifulness of Relief in the time of necessity. 144
A grand Case, put by a Christian that doubts of his Interest in God, because he hath no experience of Divine Relief, flowing into him, according to his necessity, resolved. 145
Use 1. From this Doctrine is inferr'd the woful state, and condition of those, who have no Interest in God. 152
The second Use is of Comfort to all that have an Interest in God. 154
An Objection against taking Comfort from this Doctrine, drawn from the Christians unworthy walking, of former Relief, answered. 155

SERMON

Jehovah Jireh;

OR, THE

Saints Relief

In a Time of

EXIGENCY,

Held forth in ſeveral Sermons Preached at *Stowe Market* in *SUFFOLK.*

By *Samuel Blackerby* Miniſter of the Goſpel and Vicar there.

LONDON,
Printed for *Nevil Simons*, at the *Princes Arms* in S. *Paul's Church Yard.* 1674.

Jehovah Jireh,

OR, THE

Saints Relief,

In the Time of

EXIGENCY,

Held forth in several Sermons

Preached at *Stone Market* in

DEVOLK.

By *Samuel Hartgrey*, Minister of the Gospel and Vicar there.

[illegible]

Printed for *Nevil Simmons*, at the [illegible] S. Paul's Church [illegible]

SERMON I.

The Saints Relief in a time of Exigency.

Pſal. 73. 26. *My fleſh and my heart faileth but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

THough Divine truth may be clearly underſtood by Divine revelation, yet the heart of a Chriſtian is then moſt confirmed, and ſettled in the belief thereof, and moſt confident to aſſert it, when he hath had ſome experience of the power and life thereof in himſelf; when he can ſay, I know this by experience. The firſt conception, and riſe of true faith, and ſound knowledge ſpringeth from Divine principles, revealed and explained by the Holy Spirit: but the confirmation thereof flows from experiments made, and had of thoſe principles. We need go no further, than this *Pſalm* for a proof hereof. The Prophet (whoever he was) was one that was endued, with a ſaving knowledge of Divine Principles, and with faith therein: I, but the confirmation of his faith, was made by a Divine work, in

which the life, and power of those principles shone forth. He did believe, at first, that God was good to *Israel*; I, but his faith was not strong, and able to overcome an assault, and to quench this fiery dart that Satan shot at him: until he had found the truth of this principle by experience in himself: So you may see, *vers.* 2, 3, 13, 14. Sense prevails against his faith, until such a Divine work was wrought in himself, as terminated his faith and sense in one object. Now he can, with boldness, and great confidence, assert, that God is good to *Israel*, &c. For he is able to give a demonstration thereof from his sense, as well as from faith. This you have in the Text, *My flesh and my heart faileth me, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever. q. d.* I now find it to be true by mine own experience, & I can give a particular demonstration thereof. God was good to me. I was in a languishing & sinking condition; my strength gone, and my life almost gone, the pains of death, and the sorrows of hell took hold on me, that I was giving up all my hopes for lost: And then God appeared to me, and revived and strengthened my heart. My case was very sad, and now 'tis as comfortable. My hell is turned into an heaven of joy, and comfort. So that in the words you have a two fold experiment brought in to demonstrate one precious truth. That God is good to *Israel*, that is the truth.

1. The first experiment is the Prophets malady.

2. The latter is the Prophets relief.

The first is brought in to grandize and heighten the other. Had not the Prophets malady been

so

ſo deſperate, his relief had not appeared ſo glorious. The worſe the Prophets ſtate was, the more was Gods goodneſs ſeen, in his relief and help.

Let us therefore take a further Surveigh of both,

Firſt of the malady, and therein conſider,

1. The nature or kind of it; failing.

2. The Subject, wherein it was ſeated; both in the fleſh and in the heart. Failing of the fleſh, notes out a conſumption of the outward man, or a loſs of external ſupports. So we find fleſh taken in Scripture, both properly, for the outward man, or the body of man, when the ſtrength thereof abates, and departs, the bulk, or quantity thereof leſſens, or the beauty and glory thereof fades; and alſo Metaphorically, for the loſs of external priviledges. So *Phil.* 3, 4, Fleſh is taken for all external advantages. Theſe may fail. Failing of the Heart notes out a ſinking or dying. When,

1. The faculties of the ſoul ſink, and cannot perform their due offices; either by way of apprehenſion, election, or retention.

2. When the infuſed or acquired habits of the heart are indiſpoſed to act, or are weakened, not only our moral, but our Spiritual habits much abate.

3. When the Animal ſpirits are expiring and even breathing forth.

This ſeems to be the Prophets diſeaſe and malady; he was brought very low, even to the very pit, ready to die; ſoul and body failed, all his powers weakened. When the body is ſmitten, it flies for ſuccour to the heart, (the ſpirit of a man will ſuſtein his infirmities;) but when the

heart is ſmitten alſo and that fails him too, the man is done then, he can afford himſelf no relief. Die he muſt, and will, if God comes not in. When communicated ſtrength fails, 'tis time for the man to look abroad, and ſeek for ſtrength in God, or elſe he ſinks, and never riſeth more.

Secondly, This is the Prophets relief: God comes in and fetcheth life again; reinſouls him, communicates a new ſupply of ſtrength to him, ſets him upon his feet again; this makes him to ſay as you have it in the Text, *But is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever,* צור לבבי *the rock of my heart.*

In which words we may take notice of five things,

1. The order inverted. When he mentions his malady, he begins with the failing of the fleſh, and then of the heart: but when he reports the relief, he begins with that of the heart. From hence,

Obſerve, *That when God works a cure in man (out of love) he begins with the heart, he cures that firſt.* And there may be theſe reaſons for it,

1. Becauſe the ſin of the heart is often the procuring cauſe of the malady of body and ſoul.

2. The body ever fares the better for the ſoul, but not the ſoul for the body.

3. The cure of the ſoul is the principal cure.

2. The ſuitableneſs of the remedy to the malady. Strength of heart for failing of heart, and a bleſſed portion for the failing of the fleſh.

Obſ. *That there is a proportionate remedy and re-*

lief

lief in God for all maladies and afflictions whatsoever, both within and without. If your hearts fail you, God is strength if your flesh fails you, or comforts fail you, God is a portion.

3. The Prophets intereſt, he calls God his ſtrength and his portion.

Obſ. *That true Iſraelites have an undoubted intereſt in God. He is theirs.*

4. The Prophet's experience in the worſt time. He finds this to be true, that when communicated ſtrength fails, there is a never failing ſtrength in God.

Obſ. *That Chriſtians experiences of Gods all-ſufficiency are then fulleſt and higheſt, when created comforts fail them.*

5. Here is the Prophet's emprovement of his experience, for ſupport and comfort againſt future trials and temptations.

Obſ. *That a Saints conſideration of his experience of Gods all ſufficiency in times of Exigency, is enough to bear up, and to fortifie his ſpirit, againſt all trials and temptations for the time to come.*

Thus you may emprove the Text by way of Obſervation; But there are two principal Doctrines to be inſiſted on.

Firſt, That God is the Rock of a Saints heart, his ſtrength and his portion for ever.

Secondly, That Divine influence and relief paſſeth from God to his people, when they ſtand in moſt need thereof.

Firſt, God is the rock of a Saints heart, ſtrength and portion for ever.

Here are two members or branches in this Doctrine,

צור לבבי 1. That God is the rock of a Saints heart, ſtrength.

2. That God is the portion of a Saint.

Branch, 1. God is the rock of a Saints heart, ſtrength. He is not only ſtrength, and the ſtrength of their hearts, but the rock of their ſtrength: ſo *Eſay* 17. 10. *Pſal.* 62. 7. צור the ſame word, that is uſed in the Text; from hence comes our Engliſh word *ſure*.

Explic. God is the rock of our ſtrength, both in reſpect of our naturals, and alſo of ſpirituals: he is the ſtrength of nature, and of grace, *Pſal.* 27. 1. the ſtrength of my life natural and ſpiritual. God is the ſtrength of thy natural faculties; of reaſon, and underſtanding, of wiſdom and prudence, of will and affections. He is the ſtrength of all thy graces, faith, patience, meekneſs, temperance, hope and charity; both as to their being, and exerciſe. He is the ſtrength of all thy comfort and courage; peace and happineſs; ſalvation and glory. *Pſal.* 140. 7. *O God, the rock of my Salvation*; In three reſpects.

Firſt, he is the Author and giver of all ſtrength, *Pſal.* 18. 2. It is God that girdeth me with ſtrength, *Pſal.* 29. 11. he will give ſtrength to his people, *Pſal.* 138. 3. *Pſal.* 68. 35.

Secondly, He is the increaſer and perfecter of a Saints ſtrength: it is God that makes a Saint ſtrong and mighty both to do, and ſuffer, to bear and forbear, to believe and to hope to the end; ſo *Heb.* 11. 34. *Out of weakneſs they were made ſtrong*: ſo 1 *Joh.* 2. 14. And therefore is that prayer of *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 10.

Thirdly, He is the preſerver of your ſtrength; your

your life is laid up in God; *Col.* 3. 3. your strength is kept by the strength of God; so *Psal* 91. 1. God doth overshadow the strength of Saints, that no breach can be made upon it; *Psal.* 63. 7. *In the shadow of thy wings will I trust.*

Now for Demonstration, I shall lay down six positions.

1. All strength is in God originally, and fully. God is the first strength, and the fountain of strength; He is the root & spring of strength; He is all strength in himself; He is wisdom it self, and light it self, and life it self, and grace it self. יהוה signifies sometimes the Original Fountain of things; and God is called so, because he is the beginning and efficient cause of all things, out of himself, thus *Schindler.* The strength of a Saint is but a drop in the bucket, a beam of the Sun, a spark of fire in comparison of God. He alone is all. Whatever is in the creature is eminently in God; 'tis much more in him. Hence is that Character, which God gives of himself to *Abraham, Gen.* 17. 1, *I am the Almighty God:* for this is peculiar unto him; Many beings may be called strong or mighty; but none may arrogate the title of Almighty but God: 'Tis God that is All-sufficient both for himself, and for all beings below himself. The stream is often low, and yet the spring and fountain full and high. The strength of the creature may fail; but the strength of God never fails. 'Tis fully in God, when 'tis not in us. Life may go out of the branch, and yet remain in the root; This is the happiness of Gods people, that though they have little in themselves,

they

they have enough in God. *Bleſſed is the man whoſe ſtrength is in thee*, *Pſal.* 84. 5. For when communicated ſtrength is ſpent, yet there is an incommunicated fullneſs ſtill in God. They may ſay, as the prodigal, when he had ſpent his portion; *in my fathers houſe, there is bread enough, and to ſpare.* My light is gone, and my life fails, and my grace fails, and I am reduced to a ſad condition in my ſelf: I, but there is enough in God; there is light enough, and life enough, and grace enough; God is All ſtill, even when I am nothing. I may allude to the ſtory of *Hagar*; *Gen.* 21. 15, *to the* 19. *When the water was ſpent in her bottle, God opened her eyes, and ſhe ſaw a well of water*; So when your bottles are all empty, if God do but open your eyes, ſo as to behold him, you will ſee a well, a fountain of all ſtrength.

1. The *Iſrael* of God, Gods choſen and beloved ones in Chriſt, have a peculiar intereſt in the ſtrength of God; the ſtrength of God is their ſtrength; ſo the Prophet ſaith, *God is my ſtrength.* As when Jehoſhaphat made a Covenant with *Ahab*, to go with him to *Ramoth-Gilead*, he tells him that all he was and had was *Ahabs*, 2 *Chro.* 18. 3, *I am as thou art, and my people as thy people, and my horſes as thine, i. e.* he reſerved nothing peculiar to himſelf, but gave *Ahab* an intereſt in all: ſo doth God, he reſerves nothing peculiar to himſelf, but his honour and glory (which he cannot give to another), but gives his people an intereſt in all. All the ſtrength of God, is made over to the people of God. God hath nothing, but what they have an intereſt in. Whenever God ſpeaks to a ſoul, as

he

he did to *Abraham, I will be thy God*, at that time, God passeth and maketh over himself to it: and now, that soul hath a peculiar interest in God; the strength the All-sufficiency of God is that mans, the wisdom of God, the holiness of God, the mercy of God, the will of God, is his, that heighth, and depth, that length and breadth of strength that is in God, is a Saints. When he reads the Scripture, and there finds what riches of strength there is in God, and through the Spirit of light is able to conceive very largely of God. he may then say within himself All this is mine, All that God is, is mine. When Saints go to God for strength, either of nature, or of grace, they do not go as meer beggars, but as children go to a father, in whom they have an interest, and in all that he hath, and may with boldness plead their interest therein: a most full place you have in *Esay* 63. 15, 16. & *Psal.* 119. 94. And so when God gives forth himself to Saints, he doth it, not as some great man gives *boons* to all commers to express his bounty: but as a father gives peculiar gifts to his children; so *Esay* 43. 1, 2, 3, 4.

3. According to the Saints Communion with God and God's influence into them, such is their strength. Divine incomes give strength, and maintain it. When God takes up his dwelling in the heart, it becomes strong and mighty: never before. We may say of men, that are at a distance from God, as the Prophet *Hosea to Ephraim, how weak is thine heart?* but of Saints, as *Paul* of himself, *when I am weak, then am I strong.* 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. *Paul* had close Communion with God and Christ,

and

and now the power of Divine grace reſted upon him, and took up his reſidence in him, to ſtrength him. The nearer the ſoul comes to God, and the more it enjoys of God, the ſtronger it is: a man full of God, is a man full of ſtrength; ſo you may ſee, *Micah*, 3. 8, but truly *I am full of power by the Spirit of God*; the Spirit of God was poured forth upon the Prophet, and this filled him full of power. The Diſciples of Chriſt were weak, and therefore Chriſt promiſeth to baptize them with the Holy Ghoſt, and with power; now they are able and ſtrong. Even as when the Prophet *Elias had been fed by the Raven he went in the ſtrength thereof forty days*, 1 *King.* 19. 8. So when the ſoul hath fed it ſelf upon Divine influence, it walks in the ſtrength thereof. It is not here, as with the lean kine of *Pharaoh*, that devour all the fat, and yet never the better, *for they that wait upon the Lord, ſhall renew their ſtrength*, *Eſay* 40. 31. God never lets that ſoul depart without this bleſſing, that waits upon him. I dare appeal to any experimental Chriſtian for a witneſs hereunto. Hear what *Solomon* ſaith, *Prov.* 10. 29, *The way of the Lord is ſtrength to the upright*; And alſo what *David* ſaith, *Pſal.* 27. 14, *Wait on the Lord, and he ſhall ſtrengthen thy heart: wait, I ſay, on the Lord.* This is that, which makes a diſparity between one Chriſtian and another: yea, between a Chriſtian at one time and at another. What makes one Chriſtian ſtronger then another, but the incomes of God? one enjoys more of God, then another: one hath more Communion with God, then another; one receives more from God, then another. And hence it is, that one can do that

which

which another can't, and one can ſuffer that, which another can't; one goeth heavily and drooping under his burden, when another ſings, and is merry with a burden that is far heavier; One can ſlight a temptation, and reſiſt it, although it be very great, and another is overcome, when it is ſmall. I'le give you ſome Examples hereof.

Firſt, Compare the firſt *Adam* with the ſecond; the firſt was ſuddenly overcome with a temptation, and fell from a ſtate of happineſs, into a ſtate of miſery, becauſe he had not Divine influence to ſupport him, and keep him from falling; his ſtrength was placed in himſelf, and not in God. But the ſecond *Adam* ſtands his ground, and keeps the field, againſt Satans ſtrongeſt attempts and batteries; yea, beats him with his own weapon, and forces him to retreat; becauſe the God-head dwelt bodily in him: and in him dwelt all fulneſs.

Again, Compare *Lot* and his wife, with *Abraham* in point of trial; when God would have *Lot* and his wife deny themſelves, and leave their pleaſant habitation (of which it is ſaid, that it was even as the garden of the Lord) you ſhall find, *Gen.* 19. 16, that *Lot* and his wife, were loth to obey God herein; 'tis ſaid *he lingred, &c.* But now when God tried *Abraham* in a far greater matter, ſee how willingly he obeyed God therein: ſo you may ſee, *Gen.* 22. *Rom.* 4. 20.

The ſtrength of a Chriſtian lies not ſo much in his inherent Principles, as in his aſſiſting influences: a Chriſtian is ſtrong as they flow in. As a child, in his fathers hand, may do that, which one of larger growth cannot do of himſelf; ſo a young

young Christian in the hand of Christ, can do that which old *Adam* could not do in innocency, when left to himself. A weak bearer with strong supporters, may hold a greater weight, than a stronger bearer without supporters. A weak Christian underpropt and upheld by Divine strength, may undergo and bear more, then one that hath a larger measure of inherent grace. This is that which makes a Christian differ from himself: at one time very weak, and at another time very strong; as buds open in the day, and shut at night, as a man fasting, and full differs in strength. We see *David*, at one time, is afraid of a little, and at another time fears nothing. At one time he concludes, that one day he shall perish by the hand of *Saul*, and yet not near him; at another time, when his own people spake of stoning him, he takes courage in the Lord his God. An army of flies will terrifie a Christian at one time, when as an army of Giants can't daunt him at another. Sometimes he can do nothing, at other times he can do all things. Sometimes he doth but creep, at another he runs towards heaven. Full is that *Ephes.* 1. 19, *we believe according to the working of his mighty power*, much or little; a little power put forth will produce but a little faith, a great power will produce a great faith. So that this is clear, that according to a Saints Communion with God, and Gods influence into him, such is his strength: as a man receives from God, such is his power and ability; the whole strength of a Christians heart depends upon the enjoyment of God.

1 *Sam.* 27. 1.
1 *Sam.* 30. 6.

4. Ac-

4. According to the fulneſs and extent of grace promiſed in the Covenant of grace, ſuch is Gods influence into the hearts of his people for their ſtrength. The Covenant of grace is full and large, proportioned to the eternal love of God, and the weak ſtate of fallen man; So that there is no condition into which a Saint can fall, but there is a proportionate and ſuitable good promiſed and Covenanted to it. The Covenant is Gods diſpenſative, wherein all receits for all Spiritual weakneſſes is held forth: there is not a heart failing, but there is a receit for it; ſome promiſe that is ſuitable thereunto. Now Gods ſtrength paſſeth from God through the word of promiſe. As God ſpeaks the word, ſo Divine influence flows into the ſoul. The words that I ſpeak (ſaith Chriſt) *are ſpirit and life, Joh.* 6. 63. The Lord is therefore pleaſed, to ſet forth the power and life of his promiſe by a lively ſimilitude, *Eſay* 55. 10, 11, 12, 13. Even as the rain and ſnow gives ſtrength to the earth to bring forth, and to bud, and makes it fruitful: ſo doth the word of grace give ſtrength to a weak heart, to bring forth grace and comfort, and makes it full of goodneſs. *David* had experience of this, and therefore ſaith, In God I will praiſe his word, *Pſal.* 56. 4, 10, *i.e.* This is my ſtrength; God ſpeaks the word and it is done: comfort and courage, help and ſalvation flows in, through the word of promiſe. Alaſs, I were not able to ſtand, if I had not this ſupporter to bear me up. So you may ſee, *Pſal.* 21. 13, I had fainted unleſs I had believed. God doth not only ſtrengthen his Saints, according to his word, but he ſtrengthens them by his word.

This

This is the medium through which all Divine ſtrength paſſeth into the hearts of Saints: for the ſtrength of God is in his word of promiſe, as its proper life and virtue; this makes it enlightening, enlivening, ſtrengthening, encouraging, comforting and ſanctifying; Hence is that of the Apoſtle *Peter*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 3, 4. He that takes hold on the Covenant, and on the promiſes of grace therein, takes hold of Divine ſtrength, and (as it is ſaid of *Sarah*) *ſhall receive ſtrength to conceive, and to bring forth the image, and life of God in his ſoul and converſation.* When God ſeemeth to ſtand at a diſtance from the ſoul, that ſhe can't ſee him, nor find him out: yet if the word of promiſe be nigh her and in her, ſhe can't want ſtrength, for the ſtrength of God is in it; and have you not found it thus ſometimes? that upon the reading, or hearing of a gratious promiſe of God, held forth in the Scripture, ſuch a clear light hath ſhined into your ſouls, and ſuch a ſtrength hath flowed in therewith, as to raiſe you up, and to work a mighty change in you.

5. According to that mutual tranſact that is between God the Father, and his Son Chriſt Jeſus, both on Gods part, and on the believers part, ſo doth the Covenant give forth its virtue and grace to the believer. You heard before, that the Covenant of grace is Gods means, whereby he ſtrengthens his people; there is the ſtrength of God laid out: now this means works not but as it is moved; it gives forth nothing but as it is ſet on work. Though there were healing, and ſtrengthening virtues in the pool of *Bethesda*, yet they could not put forth themſelves, until the Angel

Angel moved the waters: ſo it is here, the Covenant of grace is Gods ſtrengthening pool: 'T, but the virtue thereof is not put forth, without a motion; theſe waters are ſet on work by a mutual tranſact between the Father and the Son.

Firſt, Therefore God the Father takes the poor ſinner, and puts him into the hands of Chriſt; and ſaith thus to him: Son take this poor wretched ſinner into thine own hands, for I cannot look upon him in himſelf, I can do nothing for him, as he ſtands upon his own carnal bottome: he is undone, weak, and wretched, and ſo he muſt abide without any help, unleſs thou doſt bottome him upon thy ſelf, and hide him under the robe of thy righteouſneſs. I can't hear his prayers, nor own his deſires, nor pitty his groans, unleſs they be all perfumed with the odour of thine incenſe, and preſented to me by thy hand. The Covenant of grace, and the promiſes of grace are all made in thee, and muſt be performed in thee, and therefore he can have no benefit by them, until thou haſt an actual poſſeſſion of him: he muſt be thine, or elſe they can't be his. Then the Lord Jeſus, takes the poor ſinner, and having ſprinkled him with his blood, and waſhed him from all his guilt, hides him in his own robes, and preſents him to the Father, as an object of pitty and mercy. And after this manner mediates and interceeds with his Father, on the ſinners behalf, Heavenly Father, here is one whom thou haſt given me, for whom I have ſhed my heart blood, that I might make ſatisfaction to Divine Juſtice, for all offences committed by him againſt thee, and

purchaſe all that grace, that is in the Covenant for him: he ſtands not upon his own account, but upon mine: I am touched with the feeling of his infirmities, his weakneſs and griefs are mine, his troubles and pains are mine, his faintings and failings are mine, his tears and cries are mine, his prayers and deſires are mine: here I tender them to thee in mine own name, and beg thine audience, and acceptance of them: my ſufferings and my blood ſhed for him cries to thee: yea, thine own Covenant, ratified and confirmed with thine own oath, cries to thee for mercy and grace to help and ſtrengthen him. Now hereupon, the bowels of grace and mercy earns and melts over a poor diſtreſſed ſinner, and like the great wheel in the Clock, ſets all the leſſer wheels a going by its motion; So the grace of God ſets the Covenant of grace on work, that it may give forth its virtue and ſtrength to the ſoul.

This glorious myſtery will be beſt underſtood and cleared to you by ſeveral ſteps.

1. That God the Father is the firſt mover in this great buſineſs. He firſt loves; and then gives ſouls to Chriſt, 1 *John* 4. 19. *Heb.* 2. 13. There is a two fold giving of ſouls to Chriſt.

1. By way of Covenant deſignation or decree made in heaven between the Father and the Son, in which God made over all his elect to Chriſt, and Chriſt undertook to bear their names. So *Joh.* 10. 29. In this place he doth not only ſpeak of thoſe that did at the preſent believe, but of all others that ſhould believe. So *verſ.* 16.

2. By way of actual poſſeſſion, and ſo God gives

gives ſouls to Chriſt, as his manſion to dwell in. This is the Fathers work, *Joh.* 6. 44. *No man can come to me except the Father draw him*; When God doth draw a man to Chriſt, then he gives him to Chriſt for his actual poſſeſſion.

2. Gods deſign in giving ſouls to Chriſt, is that they may be put into a capacity for relief; for of themſelves they are not. Out of Chriſt they cannot come to God, there is no immediate acceſs to God; His firſt giving them to Chriſt by way of deſignation was for ſatisfaction; but this latter giving them to Chriſt is for application, that they may reap and enjoy the benefit of his ſatisfaction; that through Chriſt they might have acceſs to God, and an entrance into the grace of the Covenant; and therefore did *Paul* ſo earneſtly deſire that he might be found in Chriſt.

3. The whole Covenant of grace with all the promiſes therein are founded in Chriſt, and performed unto none but the choſen of God in Chriſt, and ſuch as are given to Chriſt. Hence is that of the Apoſtle, 2 *Corinth.* 1. 20. *Acts* 2. 39.

4. The Lord Jeſus owns every ſinner that is given to him by the Father as his peculiar truſt; He becomes their ſhepheard, and takes the care of them, and never leaves them, until he hath brought them into actual poſſeſſion and fruition of all Covenanting grace; You have this fully ſet forth, *Heb.* 2. 11, 12, 17, 18, with 4. 15.

5. Having taken this truſt upon him, and made it his buſineſs, he mediates with the Father for them, that the Covenant of grace,

with all the promiſes may be performed to them, *Heb.* 7. 25.

6. The Covenant being pleaded by Chriſt with the Father, muſt be performed to the ſinner. God can't in juſtice deny it; this treaſury and ſtore-houſe of grace is preſently opened, for the ſoul to come and receive grace and ſtrength; moſt full is that, *John* 14. 12, 13, 14. & *John* 16. 24.

6. According to the Spirits Revelation of this grace in the heart, ſuch is our ſenſe and feeling thereof; and according to our ſenſe thereof, ſuch is our comfort. Divine Revelation gives us the ſenſe of Spiritual incomes and influences, and a true ſenſe thereof gives us comfort; the larger the diſcovery is, the larger is our ſenſe and comfort. There is many a gratious ſoul that wants the ſtrength of comfort, and yet doth not want the ſtrength of grace and holineſs, and the reaſon is, becauſe he hath not the ſenſe and feeling of his grace. This therefore is the office of the Spirit to reveal, and make known thoſe incomes, and Divine influences which the ſoul enjoys of and from God, for his ſtrength and ſupport; As you may ſee, 1 *Cor.* 2. 10, 12. The ſpirit reveals all ſpiritual gifts to the ſouls of his Saints, that they may know them, and have the ſenſe and feeling of them in their hearts. And hence he is called the comforter, becauſe he reveals that to the ſoul which is matter of comfort. For it is the knowledge and ſenſe of things that adminiſters comfort; To be without a good, and not to know it, is all one in point of comfort; As what comfort doth any eſtate afford a man when he is ignorant

rant of his intereſt in it, and enjoyment of it. If a man have a rich Mine of Gold and Silver in any part of his lands, and yet knows not of it, it is nothing to him. So if a man have never ſuch a meaſure of gifts and graces from God, yet if he be ſtill in the dark, and know it not, he can take no comfort therein. So long as a ſoul queſtions and is in doubt about his ſpiritual eſtate, he can't have comfort; and therefore the holy Spirit comes, and makes it known to the people of God, that they may have true comfort.

Uſe. *If God be the rock of a Chriſtians heart ſtrength.* Then this may ſerve for counſel and inſtruction to all true *Iſraelites.*

1. To account God your ſtrength.

2. To give God the glory of your ſtrength.

Firſt, To account God your ſtrength; He is ſo in truth, let him be ſo in your account. Own, and acknowledge God to be your ſtrength alone. It is a Saints great priviledge that God is his ſtrength, and it is his duty to account him ſo. A Chriſtian ſhould live in the ſenſe and feeling of this truth, in the power and life of it. The notion of it is of little advantage, but the ſenſe thereof is of great uſe to a Chriſtian. And that,

1. In point of ſettlement and quiet: this is a ſure bottom for thy ſoul to ſtay upon at all times; The ſoul is like the trembling needle, that cannot ſtand ſtill, but is ever in motion, and in fear, until it is directed to God its North-pole. When a man accounts of any thing elſe as his ſtrength, he puts himſelf into a trembling poſture: he cannot fix himſelf, but is toſſed to and fro with fears

and doubts. But now, let him fix his eye upon God, as the rock of his ſtrength, and then he is quiet and at reſt, *Pſal.* 16. 8, 9. Soul trouble ariſeth from two things principally, the loſs of God, or the neglect of, and non-emproving God: if God be either at a diſtance from us, or if we do not ſet him before us, and keep him in our eye. Now he that doth not fix his eye upon God, by way of acknowledgement, will never fix his heart upon God for ſettlement; and therefore muſt needs be in continual motion, and never quiet. He that is ſtrongeſt in wiſdom, or riches, or friends, or graces, can never ſettle, nor be at quiet in his breaſt, until he fix on God. For none of theſe have an inherent, independant, and eternal ſtrength; the ſtrength of theſe is in God; and if God doth not conveigh ſome new ſupply of ſtrength into them, they will all fail us: and our experience hereof makes a man fear, that at one time or other, he may be at a loſs for ſtrength: if a fit of ſickneſs comes, a mans wiſdom and ſtrength quickly fails him: if an enemy invade the Land, a rich man may quickly be plundred of all, and made poor: and if a Chriſtian be ſurprized with a temptation, and fall into ſome groſs ſin, how will it waſt and conſume his grace? So that here can be no ſettlement nor quiet. But now, that ſoul that looks at God as his ſtrength, may well be quiet and at reſt. Moſt excellent is that of the Apoſtle *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 16, joyned with *Chap.* 5. beg. *for which cauſe we faint not*, ἐκκακοῦμεν: the word ſignifies to ſhrink back, as cowards in war: they are afraid, and can't ſtand their ground, they can't ſettle themſelves to fight,

ſight. Now ſaith the Apoſtle, we do not thus: no, we are ſettled and at quiet, whatever comes; for we look not at things that are ſeen, we look not at a created ſtrength: but at things unſeen, we look to God. What though we muſt break up houſe, and be diſſetled as to our bodily condition: yet we know, that we have a building of God, eternal in the heavens. We have a God to go to, in whom we dwell now, and with whom we ſhall dwell for ever; a Chriſtian that accounts God his ſtrength, is never at a loſs: he can never be diſſetled.

2. In point of ſucceſs, account God your ſtrength, and that will carry you out, and bear you up, until you arrive at a happy iſſue of all things. O bleſſed is the man, whoſe ſtrength is in thee: ſaith the Prophet *David*, a bleſſing doth ever attend that man that accounts God his ſtrength: he ſhall never fail of a gratious iſſue: as Divine ſtrength doth accompany that man, ſo Divine bleſſing doth ever flow from Divine ſtrength. Divine ſtrength is a River of broad waters, now a Chriſtian that accounts God his ſtrength, *is like a tree planted by a river of waters, that ever bringeth forth its fruit in due ſeaſon, Pſal.* 1. 3. *& Jer.* 17. 7, 8. Whatever his ſtate and condition is, and whatever his work and employment is, Divine ſtrength makes it fruitful and ſucceſsful. Many earthly things are ſtrong and barren, but heavenly and Divine ſtrength is never barren. Nay, wherever it is communicated, it makes them fruitful; but eſpecially when the heart is filled with it, and acted by it, the fruits thereof are full and glorious. A Chriſtians graces, and his gifts and fa-

culties are like a flock of sheep, whereof every one beareth twins, and none is barren amongst them: They all bring forth much fruit unto God and his Church. Yea, whenever a Christian goeth forth in the strength of God to perform any duty that God enjoyns him, his work shall flourish, and be exceeding successful; So *Heb.* 11. 33. This leads me some particular directions herein, that you may thus own God as your alone strength.

1. Be diffident of your own strength; go not forth in that, do not lean upon that; this counsel is given us by the Holy Ghost; *Prov.* 3. 5, 6, 7. Do not say, I have strength enough, I can do this or that of my self, my wisdom, and mine understanding, and mine abilities and parts shall help and relieve; direct and carry me through: No, this is not to own God as your strength: but to set up your self in the room of God, and to make it an Idol. Self strength is given us of God to use, but not to be rested on; for this is a departure from God. *Jer.* 17. 5, *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.* Or as the *Arabick* Version hath it: *But his heart is removed from the Lord.* O take heed of this,

1. When your strength is great in your own eyes.

2. When your work is little.

3. When your Spiritual enemies are quiet.

First, When your strength is great in your own eyes, do not rely on it: *But still own God the rock of your strength.* It is a great blessing to have inherent strength, for a man to be wise, knowing, gracious,

gratious, to be able to act for God, to mortifie ſin, and to combate with Spiritual adverſaries: but the greater meaſure of inherent ſtrength thou haſt, if reſted in, the nearer it is to a curſe and blaſt. This is certain, that God doth not always ſucceed deſigns undertaken by great ſtrength, and if God doth not aſſiſt them, they will never be effected: but he doth ever frown upon, deſert, curſe and blaſt both the ſtrength and the deſign, when men rely upon it, and truſt to it; let the ſtrength be never ſo great. I will give you ſome notable examples of this out of the Holy Scriptures; *Judg.* 10. In this Sacred Hiſtory you have three things very obſerveable. Firſt, *Iſrael* had a good cauſe in hand, as you may read at large, *Chap.* 19. Secondly, *Iſrael* did far exceed the *Benjamites* in ſtrength, for the number of *Iſrael* was 400000 men, and the number of *Benjamin* was but 26000 men. Thirdly, the *Iſraelites* did ask counſel of God about the order of their fight, *verſ.* 18. 23. And yet you ſhall find that God did not proſper them, neither in their firſt, nor in their ſecond attempt; but gave victory to the *Benjamites* againſt the men of *Iſrael*, who loſt 40000 in the two battles. Neither did he go along with the men of *Iſrael*, until he had humbled them, and brought them to a low frame of heart; So you may ſee, *verſ.* 26. 'Tis true, they had enquired of God before: I, but they too much relyed upon their own ſtrength, and God would abaſe that before he gave them deliverance. Many a man will pray, and rely upon his prayer, and not on God: I, But God will not own ſuch a prayer. No, thou muſt be emptied of all ſelf,

and

and make God thine All ſtrength, or elſe God will not own thee. Another example is that of *Abijah*, and *Jeroboam*, 2 *Chron.* 13. 3. 16, 17, *Jeroboams* Army was double to *Abijahs*; and yet the victory was given to *Abijah*. A third example will drive the nail home to the head, and prove the thing in hand fully. It is that of the Apoſtle *Peter*. He was a man, of all the Diſciples the moſt couragious; and forward to confeſs and own Chriſt at all times: yea, to obey his commands; As you may ſee, *Matt.* 14. 28, and to *Matt.* 16. 15, 16, *Matt.* 17. 4. & *Matt.* 26. 33. But obſerve, that though *Peter* was thus ſtout and courageous, yet becauſe he relyed upon his own ſtrength, he fell by a three-fold denial of his Maſter; So *Matth.* 26. 69. God doth ever diſmount ſelf confidence, and throw it in the dirt: a proud, ſelf confident Chriſtian, is ſeldom ſucceſsful, or inſtrumental in the work of God. I have not read of any, as far as I remember. The truth is, a man is ever the leaſt able, and uſeful, when he thinks himſelf the beſt. The ſtronger thou thinkeſt thy ſelf the weaker thou art. The more thou truſteſt to a ſtrength within thy ſelf, the leſs thou ſhalt receive from God. How often have we found it by experience, that when we have expected great things by and from our own ſtrength, we have been moſt foiled: and the higher we have built our neſt in the rock of inherent ſtrength, the lower we have fallen. What is the reaſon, that when Chriſtians have thought themſelves the moſt prepared for an ordinance, they have received the leaſt benefit by it. And when they have been the moſt enlarged in a duty, they have miſcarried

ſud-

ſuddenly after it. And when they have received the moſt comfort in a duty, or an ordinance, they have had the darkeſt cloud upon their ſpirits immediately following? Nay, when they have received the greateſt influence from Divine ſtrength, for the increaſe of grace, yet they have found a ſenſible withdrawing of the Spirit of God afterwards from them. O Beloved, it is becauſe they have reſted upon theſe more then they have upon God the rock of their ſtrength: and therefore when your ſtrength is greateſt, do not rely upon it.

Secondly, When your work is little, yet be ſelf-diffident: It is not for a Chriſtian to ſay, my work is but ſmall, and therefore I may rely upon my ſelf for ability to perform it. For though ſome works of a Chriſtian are but little in compariſon of others, yet no work is ſo little, but will require a greater ſtrength, than what thou haſt received; full is that; 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. What work is leſs then that of thoughts? And yet ſaith the Apoſtle, *we are not ſufficient of our ſelves to think any thing, as of our ſelves:* if thy Spiritual and Natural ſtrength be never ſo great, and thy work never ſo little, yet thou muſt have a freſh ſupply of ſtrength from God thy Rock, or elſe thou canſt not perform it well. Beloved, we may as well give our ſelves a Licence or Commiſſion, as we may depend upon our own ſtrength, for the diſcharge of the leaſt duty. But if we have no Commiſſion for our work, but our own, it can't own God for its Soveraign: and if we have no ſtrength but our own, to perform it by, it can't call God Father: neither will it be acceptable to him,

him, or rewarded by him: as you may ſee; *Heb.* 11. 6. *Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*: As without faith in Chriſt for acceptance, ſo without faith in God for aſſiſtance. Works performed meerly by a ſelf ſtrength, are not of the right ſtamp, they come not from God, and therefore cannot have acceptance with God. They are not the off ſpring of Divine ſtrength; and therefore cannot intitle themſelves to Divine favour.

Thirdly, When your ſpiritual enemies are ſtill and quiet: ſin within, and Satan without, are not always alike active againſt thee. No! they lie in wait for an advantage, that they may take thee of a ſudden, when thou art at a diſtance from the rock of thy ſtrength. *What though the roaring Lion hath betaken himſelf to his Den, and there lurks, will any man be ſo fooliſh, as to quit his place of ſafety; and (truſting to his corporal ſtrength) walk to and fro by the mouth of the Lyons Den?* much leſs ſhouldeſt thou forſake God the rock of thy ſtrength, and walk up and down the world, where Satan lurks, and ſometimes hides himſelf from thee, with a dependance upon thy ſelf ſtrength for ſafety: for thou knoweſt not how ſoon he may break forth upon thee. No! but in the time of thy greateſt peace, labour for the neareſt and cloſeſt communion with thy God. Betake thy ſelf to that rock of ſtrength, that muſt be thy ſafety in time of trouble: excellent was that piece of policy of *Aſa*, 2 *Chro.* 14. 6, 7. He that will not make God the rock of his ſtrength in the time of peace, can't expect God to be his rock of ſtrength in the time of war: He that will

will be ſheltered from a ſtorm at Sea, muſt not quit and forſake the ſhip in a calm. Gods counſel therefore to *Noah* was, to enter into his Ark before the ſtorm came: and this muſt be your practiſe if you would be ſafe; you muſt not truſt your own naked ſelf ſtrength, no, not in the moſt ſerene part of your life: for you know not how ſoon a ſtorm may ariſe, an enemy may aſſault you, and then what will you do?

2. Reſt upon God alone for all ſtrength: throw thy ſelf into his arms, that he may bear thee up, and carry thee along through all thy ways. *Pſal.* 37. 5, 6, 7, *Commit thy way unto the Lord, truſt alſo in him, &c.* Or roll thy way upon the Lord; Throw thy ſelf firſt, and then thy way upon God; for he is thy ſtrength, and ſupporter; So *Pſal.* 55. 22, *Caſt thy burden upon the Lord, and he ſhall ſuſtein thee*; The beſt way to eaſe thy ſelf, is to lay thy load upon God, he will take it up, and alſo carry thee. There is many a man would be willing to go of himſelf, if another would but carry his burden for him: but if thou throweſt thy burden upon God, he will not only carry that, but will alſo carry thee. He cares not how much weight a Chriſtian layeth on his back: a true *Iſraelite* may eaſe himſelf, and beſt pleaſe his God at once. God delights not to ſee tears in thine eyes, or paleneſs in thy countenance: thy groans and ſighs make no Muſick in his ears: he had rather that thou wouldeſt free thy ſelf of thy burden, by caſting it upon him, that he might rejoyce in thy joy and comfort. Now true confidence in God, and reſting upon God, will both free thee of thy burden, and alſo bring in the

ſtrength

ſtrength of God, to ſuſtein and bear thee up from falling: wouldeſt thou therefore own God as thy ſtrength, and fetch ſtrength from God to thy ſoul, reſt upon God, roll thy ſelf upon him. And that,

1. In times of greateſt weakneſs.
2. In times of the greateſt ſervice.
3. In times of the greateſt trials.

Firſt, In times of greateſt weakneſs; when thou feeleſt thine inherent ſtrength to fail, yet be not diſcouraged, but reſt upon the rock of thy ſtrength. That is the trueſt act of Faith, that hath no created ſupporters: but is terminated in God alone: it is no hard matter for a ſtrong man to believe, and to be confident, but it is a difficult thing for a man to diſcern the truth of his faith, when created ſtrength is at its height; take away the crutch, and then you will ſee, what he will lay hold on next, to bear up his lame legs with. When a Chriſtian finds nothing in himſelf, then to reſt on God, is an evidence of true faith. Faith in God under poverty of Spirit, is a precious faith: 'tis ſuch a faith as is peculiar to the people of God; ſuch a faith as they muſt ſet on work; *Zeph.* 3. 12, *I will leave among you, men that are humble, a poor people, and they ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord.* When God hath emptied a man of all ſelf-ſtrength, and made him poor, then is the time for him to truſt in the Lord. God hath a way to make a rich man poor, and take nothing from him, and to make a ſtrong man weak, and yet not diminiſh his ſtrength. *Queſt.* How doth God this? *Anſw.*

Anſw. By giving him an humble ſpirit; making him poor in ſpirit, So that his heart is taken off his riches, and off his ſtrength, and now ſuch an one will truſt in God. But ſometimes God makes men poor, and brings them low indeed, on purpoſe, that they may learn to truſt in God alone. 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. *We received the ſentence of death, that we might learn, not to truſt in our ſelves, but in the living God*; So 1 *Tim.* 1. 5, *She that is a widow, is left alone, and truſts in God.* Why truly to allude to this; there is many a ſoul who hath been wedded to a ſelf-ſtrength, and God hath cut it off, and made her a widow; one left alone, that ſhe might truſt in God, *Rom.* 7. 4. O Beloved if this be your caſe, that God hath widdowed your ſouls, and ſtript you naked of all created and communicated ſtrength, that you are poor and weak, helpleſs and comfortleſs, now is your time to caſt your ſouls on God for all ſtrength to bear you up.

Secondly, In times of the greateſt and higheſt ſervice and employment, whether doing or ſuffering, account God your ſtrength, by reſting on him, and truſting in him; 1 *Tim.* 4. 10, *Therefore we labour and ſuffer reproach, becauſe we truſt in the living God.* The work of the Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians was very great, and very high; they ſtood in need of a mighty aid, for it was beyond their inherent ſtrength, and therefore they did commit themſelves, and their work, to the rock of their ſtrength. As there is no work ſo little but exceeds our ſtrength, ſo there is no work ſo great, but there is a proportion'd ſtrength to it, to be had in God. When God there-

therefore calls thee forth to hard and high ſervice, ſuch as makes every vein in thy heart to bleed, and every ſtring ready to crack, do not think it a work beyond omnipotency's power: ſit not down dejected, as if God required impoſſibilities of thee, but truſt him; and thou ſhalt but bear the name, he will do the work: no man ever failed in his work, who had the ſtrength of God for his help. His ſtrength ever riſes as his work riſes, and the higher the ſervice is, the greater ſhall be his ſtrength, *Eſay* 40. 29, 30, 31. *And therefore when God called Moſes forth to deliver Iſrael from the power of Egypt*, ſee what he ſaith to him, *Exod.* 3. 10, 11, obſerve here, *Moſes is doubtful of his own ſtrength, and pleads that, as an excuſe for his refuſal of the work.* Who am I? *q. d.* Alaſs, this is a work beyond my skill and ability to perform. Now, to this, God anſwers, by a promiſe of his preſence; *I will certainly be with thee: q. d.* I will make up all thy imperfections and weakneſs in mine own fulneſs and ſtrength: the greater the work is, the more I will manifeſt my ſelf; and the leſs thou haſt in thy ſelf, the more thou ſhalt receive from me. And therefore when *Moſes* pleads his excuſe with a particular demonſtration of his inability; God gives a particular anſwer. *Exod.* 4. 10, 11, 12, Lord (ſaith *Moſes*) *I am not eloquent, but am ſlow of ſpeech, and of a ſlow tongue, and therefore very unfit for the work.* I am not able to deliver thy meſſage either to *Pharao* or to the children of *Iſrael*, but ſhall rather ſpoil it, then deliver it. Now God gives a particular anſwer to this particular objection. Firſt, by way of Interrogation; Who made mans mouth? *i. e.* Cannot

not I that made the mouth, cure the imperfection of it? cannot I give thee an eloquent and a ready tongue. Secondly, by way of particular promiſe in reference to that particular caſe. Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou ſhalt ſay; the like you have, *Matt.* 10. 19, *It ſhall be given you in that ſame hour, what ye ſhall ſpeak.* Divine aſſiſtances do ever flow in according to the greatneſs of the work; It ſhall be all one to thee, to perform a very high piece of ſervice for God, with a ſtrength proportioned to it, as it will be to do a leſſer work with a little ſtrength. Do but reſt upon the rock of your ſtrength, and you will never be troubled at your work.

Thirdly, In times of the greateſt trials: when thou art conflicting with ſpiritual or corporal enemies, then reſt on the rock of thy ſtrength. Sometimes a Chriſtian is (as it were) drawn forth into the field to encounter with ſin and Satan, and theſe two grand enemies of the ſouls Salvation, do ſet all their power and policy on work, to foil and ruine him: ſin, that ſets upon him (as Satans meſſenger) and buffets him, and Satan ſtands with his bow in his hand, and ſhoots fiery darts at him, to wound and torment his ſoul: Now what ſhould he do in this caſe? why, reſt on the rock of his ſtrength. It was a ſaying of *Luther*: *He that moſt ſtrongly truſts to Gods aſſiſtance, he moſt ſurely defends himſelf.* And I find it written of S. *Auguſtin*, that after his firſt converſion to the faith, he was grievouſly vexed with inward conflicts againſt his corrupt affections; and after long ſtrugling with them by a ſelf-ſtrength, which

he found too weak to overcome, and musing what to do more, he heard a voice saying, *in te stas & non stas: thou standest in thy self, and therefore dost not stand.* Whereupon apprehending that a self strength could not mortifie and conquer his corruptions, he betook himself to the rock of his strength, and at last found such inward assistance thereby, as made him stand his ground, and overcome his enemies. And this is according to Holy Writ; as you may see, *Ephes.* 6. 10, 12. *Finally my brethren be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, &c. i. e.* If you would be able to encounter with your spiritual adversaries, and to stand your ground, you must rest upon the rock of your strength: you must be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. *Fides sit tecum, & tecum est Deus in tribulatione, Aug. in Psal.* 90, *Have faith with thee, and God is with thee.* And know this, that the strength of sin and Satan, could never match the strength of God; and hence it is, that the people of God have ever conquered, both sin and Satan at the last, and are able to say as *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 15. *thanks be to God that giveth us the victory*, 2 *Cor.* 2. *and causeth us to triumph.* And what though a Christian is beset with corporal enemies, yet if he do but set faith on work, he shall find strength coming from the rock of his strength to bear him up against them. And hence is that of *David, Psal.* 56. 3, *at what time I am afraid I will trust in thee.* The flesh will have its work in a good man, and stir up passions of fear and grief, when danger is near; I, but these shall not

not get the upper hand, if faith be ſet on work, and therefore ſaith *David*, *at what time I am afraid, I will truſt in thee.* And as it overcomes our fears, ſo it overcomes our dangers too: for it carries the ſoul to the rock of ſtrength to help us againſt them. Moſt full is that of *Aſa*, 2 *Chron.* 14. 8, 9, 10, *uſq; fin.* The like you have, 2 *Chron.* 20. 12, 13, 15. & *Judges* 7. 14. *Pſal.* 118. 6, 7, to the 14, & *David* to *Goliah*, 1 *Sam.* 17. 45.

This is the firſt branch of the uſe.

Secondly, Is God the rock of your ſtrength? then give God the glory of your ſtrength: Take heed of robbing God, that you may ſacrifice to your ſelves: but as you have the comfort, ſo let him have the glory.

1. By due acknowledgements; ſay in your hearts and with your tongues, all my ſtrength is from God, and all my ſtrength is in God, and God is the rock of my ſtrength: Thus doth *David*, *Pſal.* 18. 32. *It is God that girdeth me with ſtrength.* *Pſal.* 27. 1. *Pſal.* 28 7, 8. *and he exhorts others thereunto*, *Pſal.* 68. 34.

2. By a frequent reviewing and recording your experience of heart-ſtrengthening influences: call to mind and take ſpecial notice of the incomes of ſtrength from God, A Chriſtian ſhould be Gods Notary, and his heart a book of Records, wherein all the memorable incomes of God, are written down. He that ſeeth not what God hath done for him, will never give God the praiſe of his doings: and he that buries Gods works in forgetfulneſs, makes God a looſer by his gains. Hence it is, that *David* rouſes up his ſoul, and all within him, and lays that charge upon himſelf, *Pſal.* 103. 2.

Forget not all his benefits; He that will give God the glory of a mercy, muſt ſhew it written firſt upon his heart; the heart is the firſt mover in a man: all a mans members are but the Organs of the ſoul, that ſets them all on work; the tongue will ſing and praiſe God, when the heart dictates to it, and ſtirs it up: now unleſs a mans memory be active, and his underſtanding quick in reviewing, and calling to mind the incomes of God, the heart will lie dead, and never ſtir.

3. By imploying your ſtrength for God, that God may have his own returned with advantage: This is Gods end in giving you ſtrength, that you may work for him: Oh, take heed of a ſloathful idle ſpirit; for this is to bury your talent in the earth of ſenſuality and vanity; and hence it is that *Paul* admoniſhes *Timothy*, to ſtir up the gift that was in him, and not to neglect it; 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. This is alſo his charge upon the *Romans*, *Rom.* 12. 12, an unactive ſtrong Chriſtian is as unprofitable, as he that hath no ſtrength: and an unprofitable ſervant is in great danger of five evils,

1. Of the loſs of Gods comforting preſence.

2. Of the loſs of Gods aſſiſting preſence for a time.

3. Of falling into ſome powerful temptation; So *David* fell.

4. Of corrupting thy heart.

5. Of an abatement of thy ſtrength.

Firſt, Of the loſs of Gods comforting preſence; He that doth not draw nigh to God in duty, ſhall not find God nigh to him in comfort. Can any idle

idle ſervant expect the favour of his Maſter, and a reward at night, when as he hath loytred all the day? No more, may idle, unactive Chriſtians. How canſt thou expect a ſmile, from God, or any manifeſtation of love, that ſpendeſt thy moſt precious time and ſtrength in the ſervice of another Maſter? as the withdrawing of Gods quickening preſence lays the ſoul up, that it grows dull and heavy: ſo a dull and dead Spirit unto Holy Service, oftentimes cauſeth God to withdraw his comforting preſence. You have both in one verſe, *Eſay* 64. 7, *And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold on thee, for thou haſt hid thy face from us, and haſt conſumed us, becauſe of our iniquities.* The reaſon why they were ſo dead and unactive, that they ſtirred not up themſelves, to take hold on God, was becauſe God had hid his face from them; and the reaſon of Gods hiding his face from them, was for their iniquities, ſins of omiſſion, as well as of commiſſion. Little do Chriſtians think, what they looſe, when they neglect an opportunity of calling upon Gods name, ſeeking Gods face, hearing of his word, and putting their graces upon exerciſes: Why, they looſe the comforts of God, that are to be enjoyed in thoſe exerciſes; the leaſt ray and drop of which are more to be prized then the whole world. God never hides his face ſo ſoon, and ſo long from a Chriſtian, as when he withdraws his hand from Holy work. As Apoſtaſie from God and his ways cauſeth a total rejection, God turns his back upon that man, that withdraws from him; ſo a deadneſs and dulneſs in the work of God, will moſt certainly cauſe a frown

from God. He hides his face from such, as being ashamed to own them. And indeed it is a shame, that Satans servants should be more active and laborious in his vasallage and drudgery, then the servants of God oftentimes are in their high and heavenly calling and employment. I say, God is even ashamed of them, and therefore hides his face from them. O it is very good for Christians to examine themselves, when they find an ebb in their comforts, whether there is not an ebb in their spirits, that they are not so lively and active for God as they have been.

Secondly, idle, unactive Christians, that do not lay out their strength for God, are in danger of the loss of Gods assisting presence for a time. To what purpose should God give in new influences, when as the soul neglects to lay out his former incomes? What reason hath the soul to expect, that God should stand by him, and give in a new supply of grace, to sit still, and do nothing? God is not so prodigal of his grace, and 'tis but folly in the soul to expect it. The promise runs thus; the Lord is with you, while you are with him, *i. e.* when the soul waits upon God in the way of obedience, and is faithful to lay out communicated strength therein to the utmost, then God attends all his motions, and communicates new supplies to help him forward therein: but now when the heart grows dead, and the spirit dull to Holy employment, God withdraws himself, and leaves the soul for a time. Some say, they must not enter upon a duty, until the spirit of God moves them: Why truly such men oftentimes sit still a long time without a motion from the spirit. No: we must

attempt

attempt our duty, and then we may hope for the motions of the ſpirit: but otherwiſe we cannot. The Holy Spirit is an active Spirit, and he cannot endure to lodge in an idle unactive ſoul: alſo when the ſoul once takes off his hand from Holy employment, the Holy Spirit departs. The Church never found ſuch a ſenſible withdrawing of her beloved from her, as when ſhe was laid down to reſt her ſelf upon her pillow of eaſe and ſelf enjoyment. As you may ſee, *Cant.* 5. 2, 6. *She found it very hard to recal him, and recover her enjoyment of him.* And ſo it will be with all thoſe that are in that poſture. Mark her expreſſion: *I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himſelf and was gone: my ſoul failed when he ſpake. I ſought him, but I could not find him, I called him, but he gave me no anſwer.* See here how God repays the ſoul in its own Coyn. She will do nothing for God, and now God will do nothing for her. She would not anſwer God, when he called, but was dumb and ſilent, and now God will not anſwer her, when ſhe calls. She would not ſeek him, when he offered to be found of her, and now he will not be found, though ſhe ſeek him. She would not lay out that ſtrength for God which ſhe had, and now he denies her that ſtrength, which ſhe wants.

Thirdly, An idle, unactive Chriſtian is in danger of falling into ſome powerful temptation. When a man once leaves off working for God, Satan will preſently ſet him to work. If thou canſt not find in thine heart to pray, meditate, believe, repent, and walk cloſe with God, the Devil will find thee work to thy coſt. The truth is, the ſoul

of man can't lie ſtill, it muſt move and act: Now if it be taken off from that which is good, it will fall to that which is naught. Little did *David* think, what a bait Satan had laid for him, when he went up to the roof of his houſe, and there walked; from thence did thoſe two horrible ſins of uncleanneſs and murther take their riſe. When a man goeth forth out of his Chamber in a morning, with a purpoſe to ſpend a day idly and vainly, he little thinks what the iſſue thereof may be before night. An idle unactive Chriſtian tempts Satan to tempt him, and Satan never goeth up and down unprovided, but according to the temper of the perſon, or the ſeaſon of the year, or the place of a mans converſe, or the age of his life, fits and prepares ſuch a ſnare for him, as may moſt undoubtedly catch him, to the breaking of his peace, and the wounding of his conſcience; And indeed the leſs any Chriſtian works for God, the greater advantage Satan hath to work upon him. When thou intermitteſt thy ſeaſons of praying and converſing with God in his Holy Ordinances, then the roaring Lion comes, and makes a prey of thee: Thou art then meat for his tooth: And know this, that ſins of Commiſſion do, for the moſt part, if not always, take their riſe at ſins of Omiſſion. Thou doſt not perform that which God commands, and Satan provokes thee to that which God hath forbidden. Thou ſtragleſt and wandereſt out of Gods way, and 'tis no wonder if this high way adverſary take thee up.

Fourthly, Thou art in danger of having thy heart more corrupted hereby. The heart of the

b.ſt

beſt is bad enough, but by idleneſs it will be worſe. Standing water will ſoon corrupt; and ſo will an idle unactive ſpirit. The leſs a Chriſtian is imployed in Holy Duties, the worſe will his heart grow, more prone to evil, and leſs diſpoſed to good. When a Clock ſtands ſtill long, the wheels will contract ruſt, and put it out of Order. Even thus it will be with the heart of man; when it is not in continual motion towards God, and often wound up into an heavenly frame, it contracts abundance of filth, that puts it out of order, and renders it unfit for holy action: it his hard to get the heart into a good frame for communion with God, if a Chriſtian take never ſo much pains with it; but if it be in never ſo good a temper, it will ſoon be out again, if a man take not as much pains to keep it ſo, as to get it into it. The corruption that is in mans heart, will quickly overtop his grace, if he ſtirs not up himſelf to oppoſe it. An idle Chriſtian cannot continue a good Chriſtian long.

Fifthly, If thou beeſt idle and unactive thy Spiritual ſtrength will much abate: So much as thou abateſt of this Chriſtian work, ſo much will thy ſpiritual ſtrength abate. He that will not work when he can, will not be able to work when he would. For as grace is ſtrengthened by exerciſe, ſo it decays by idleneſs; And it is a juſt judgement of God to take away our Talents from us when we do not improve them for his advantage, *Matt.* 25.

Branch 2. God is *Iſraels* portion for ever.

Now in the handling this truth I ſhall do three things.

1. Prove

1. Prove it by Scripture.
2. Explain it.
3. Give you the grounds and reaſons, and ſo apply it.

Firſt, For proof, turn to that of *David*, *Pſal.* 119. 57. & 142. 5. *Jer.* 10. 16, the ſame with *Jer.* 51. 19, word for word, and *Lam.* 3. 24.

Secondly, For explanation, I ſhall both give you the ſenſe of the word; and alſo ſhew you in what reſpect God is a portion.

In the Hebrew word, there is a Metaphor taken from the old cuſtom of dividing inheritances, in which every heir had his part given him by lot: and that was called his portion; ſo *Joſh.* 18. 5. 6. In like manner God is *Iſraels* portion. *A diviſion is made of heaven and earth; of God and the creature: the men of the world have their portion in the world. Pſal.* 17. 14, *and the Iſrael of God, have God for their portion.* Now a portion notes out a mans All; All he hath to live upon for ſuſtenance content and ſatisfaction. But God is the godly man's All. *Deus eſt unde vivant. Aug. in Pſa.* 119. 57. *He lives upon God. God is his ſuſtentation content and ſatisfaction.* Though God ſometimes is pleaſed to give much of the earth to a godly man; as he did to *Abraham*, *Lot*, *&c.* yet that is not their portion, not their All. And therefore ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Whom have I in heaven but thee, viz. as my portion?* *Pſal.* 73. 25. And ſo when God takes away all a Chriſtians earthly ſubſtance, he takes not away his portion. *Job* loſt all his earthly goods, and yet *Job* loſt not his portion. God was his All ſtill. When God gives riches in abundance

to

to a godly man, 'tis but God in thoſe riches, God in lands, God in money, God in All: and therefore theſe may be all taken from him, and yet he keep his portion ſtill. In like manner if a godly man have never ſo much of the world, he is not ſatisfied therewith unleſs God be his too. When *Luther* had many gifts ſent him by good friends, he turn'd himſelf to God, and ſaid, *That God ſhould not put him off with theſe things: As an heir though he have money, cloathes and victuals, yet ſtill looks after the inheritance*: 'tis ſo with a good man.

Dat deus portionem in terra viventium, ſed non aliquid a ſe extra ſe. Aug. in Pſal. 14. 2. 5.

Secondly, In what reſpect may God be ſaid to be a portion?

Anſ. A portion hath three properties in it; and all attributable unto God.

Firſt, a portion is a good, *Matt.* 7. 11, and hence a mans eſtate is called *bona*; becauſe it conſiſts of ſeveral good things. Thus God is a portion for he is good, *Pſal.* 100. 5. *Pſal.* 34. 8, *O taſte and ſee that the Lord is good.* Nay, God is the chief and higheſt good: not only good, but goodneſs it ſelf; All good in created beings is a participation of Divine Goodneſs. For there is but one efficient, exemplary and final goodneſs: that from whence good comes, according to which all good things are made, and to which all things tend. The goodneſs of God is not only the Original copy and firſt Idea according to which God drew all things, but the higheſt good, whereunto all things do tend, as their ultimate end. So *Rom.* 11 *ult. For of him, and through him, and for him are all things.*

Second-

Secondly, A portion is a ſuitable good. Men do not give Stones and Scorpions, Poiſon or Priſons to their Children as a portion, *Matt.* 7. 11. Thus God is a portion; For he is a ſutable good; Nothing ſo ſutable to the ſtate of man, and the nature of the ſoul, as God is. Name what you will, riches, honours, pleaſures in the world are not; theſe are heterogeneal things; The ſoul of man is ſpiritual and ſubline: Such a good is God; and whatever the ſoul pants after it is enjoyable in him. Hence God is reſembled, and ſet out by ſuch things as man ſtands moſt in need of, and are the moſt delightful to the heart of man.

1. God ſets forth himſelf by the element of water, ſo *Eſay* 33. 21, *Now water is a refreſhing creature, to the ſpirit of a thirſty man*, Eſay 32. 2.

2. God is alſo life, *Pſal.* 36. 9, now what is more ſuitable or convenient unto a dead man then life? a dead man can't have true content and ſatisfaction; nothing can ſuſtein and keep a dead corpſe from putrifaction and corruption, but life. All beings ſink and periſh without life. They are comfortleſs and miſerable without life. I, but that ſoul that enjoys God, hath life, his preſence quickens a dead ſoul to the life of God, the life of holineſs, and the life of happineſs. So that he that enjoys God, is eternally ſuſtein'd and can never die. So *John* 6. 50, to 57. 3, God is alſo ſet forth under the notion of light. *Pſal.* 27. 1, a thing moſt comfortable and pleaſant; and exceeding ſuitable to the ſtate of man. Darkneſs ſhuts up a man in miſery: but light brings him forth. Man is brought into the world in a ſtate of

of darkneſs, and never ſeeth the light of life, until he comes to God, *Pſal.* 36.9, In thy light ſhall we ſee light. In a word, God is that which the ſoul ſtands in need of to render it happy and glorious. Whatever the ſoul wants, it muſt have from God. It is he alone that gives grace and glory; and when he hath given both; himſelf muſt be all in all or elſe the ſoul can't have content: give what you will to a thirſty heart, and yet it is not content unleſs you give him that which is convenient for thirſt. 'Tis not gold, nor ſilver, that will ſatisfie him: No, he muſt have drink: 'tis ſo inall other caſes. In like manner, a ſoul that hungers and thirſts after God, cannot be ſatisfied without the enjoyment of him.

Thirdly, A portion is an adæquate and proportionable good. Every legacy is not a portion. A portion (as was hinted before) is a mans livelyhood, his All. Now a mans All muſt be proportioned to a mans neceſſity; it muſt be enough to live upon. Thus God is the Saints portion; he is enough; the ſoul needs no more then God to live upon; God may well be the Saints All; for he is All-ſufficient, *Gen.* 17.1, *I am the Almighty God*, or *God All-ſufficient*; God is *pars abundantiſſima, & ſufficientiſſima.* The ſoul that enjoys God may truly ſay as *Eſau* to his brother *Jacob*, when he offered him a large preſent, *Gen.* 33.9, I have enough Brother, or as the prodigal ſaid of his Father, *there is bread enough and to ſpare*, Luk. 15.17; there is not only enough, but much to ſpare in God. The ſoul is of a vaſt capacity, all the world can't give it enough, I, but God can, and yet

yet when it is ſatisfied, he hath never the leſs ſtill. The heart of man is ever craving and begging until it be filled with all the fulnes of God; and then it is quiet. That man that takes up his reſt, and ſaith within himſelf, I have enough, I need not ask any more, I may leave off praying and ſeeking, is either very ignorant of the dimenſions and fulneſs of God, or elſe is very proud and ſelf-conceited. For let a man draw never ſo much, yet the well is deep, and there is as much as ever was. O the bottomleſs goodneſs of God! O the inexhauſtible fountain of Divine perfection! No heart is able to fathom or contain it. Demonſtration.

Q. But how comes God to be the Saints portion?

Firſt, it flows from Gods free donation, God hath given himſelf to his Saints. That is properly a mans portion, that his father gives him. Now becauſe God can give no greater good then himſelf, therefore he gives himſelf to his Saints. God is their Father, and they muſt have a portion from him: and God cannot think any thing below himſelf a portion for them. He can give the world to his enemies, I, but he gives himſelf to his children; Hence it is ſaid, that God hath ſet apart him that is godly for himſelf, *Pſal.* 4. 3, *and the Lord hath choſen Jacob for himſelf, Pſal.* 135. 4, *even as a man takes a child and adopts him, makes him his own, and then gives him a portion*; ſo doth God. 1 *John* 3. 1, and *Rom.* 8. 17. Now what is the inheritance but God himſelf? Nothing below God is the inheritance of Chriſt who is the Son, and nothing leſs then God is the inheritance of Saints, who are Gods younger children; but this

this is not by humane purchaſe, but by Divine gift. For alaſs, all the gold & ſilver in the world, is not to be weighed againſt God as a ſufficient price. All the nations of the earth, are but as a drop in the bucket, and, as the duſt in the ballance; Nay, as nothing, and counted to him leſs then nothing. No, this is an inheritance not to be bought by any finite price: Nay, whatever thou valueſt the moſt, yet comes infinitely ſhort of a ſufficient price. Wert thou more righteous then the Angels or *Adam* in innocency, yet all thy good works would not bring thee in a ray of Divine glory by way of merit. Why elſe had not the Apoſtate Angels and *Adam* in innocency the preſence of God, for their ſuſtentation to keep them from falling, but to evidence this truth, that mans righteouſneſs cannot purchaſe the enjoyment of God?

2. This flows from a Saints ſelf-denying reſignation. A true Saint denyes himſelf in all but God, and to him he reſigns up himſelf. Self-denial outs a man of all earthly goods in point of affection and affiance; and carries him to God alone for ſuſtenance, content and comfort; So *Pſal.* 73. 25. A true Chriſtian dare not own any thing as his All but God; He hath a true right to all that he enjoys as to uſe, but he doth not account it as his portion; No, he reſigns himſelf to God, as his life and All; So *David*, *Pſal.* 27. 1, God is my life, *i. e.* I live upon God, and have all in him; I betake my ſelf wholly to him; and, to him only. So *Pſal.* 62. 1. the word rendred (truly) ſignifies (only), *i. e.* I betake my ſelf to God alone; I go no whither elſe; and the truth is, none but a true Chriſtian knows the emptineſs of the creature, and

and the fulneſs of God, and therefore he alone lets all go for God. Thoſe things which are the worldlings gain, a Saint accounts loſs for God; now when a man hath thus outed himſelf of All for God, he would have nothing at all to live upon, if he did not fix on God; as S. *Paul* ſaid, 1 *Cor.* 15. 19, *If our hopes were in this life we were of all men the moſt miſerable.* What, to looſe earth and heaven together? To deny a mans ſelf in all worldly advantages, and not to have a God to lay hold on? This is moſt ſad! No, therefore the Chriſtian is ſo wiſe as to make an happy exchange, to forſake all for God, and having forſaken all for God, God takes him to himſelf; Hence is that gratious promiſe, (*Hoſ.* 14. 3.) *The fatherleſs ſhall find mercy*; God is the portion of none but ſpiritual Orphans; he becomes guardian to none other; Mercy in God ſuppoſes miſery in the creature. Now when the ſoul becomes the moſt wretched and miſerable in its own ſenſe, then it is an object of mercy, *Matth.* 5. 3, *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit for their is the kingdom of God.*

3. God is a Saints portion by way of fruition: he enjoys God truly here and fully hereafter. God is not only round about his people, as their wall of protection: but he is in their hearts as their life and well-head of eternal comfort and ſatisfaction, 1 *John* 3. 24, *He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him.* There is a mutual inhabitation; they dwell each in other, and ſo enjoy one another. So vaſt is the ſoul of man, that nothing but God can fill it, and therefore God dwells in a Saint: ſo immenſe

and

and incomprehenſible are the dimenſions of God, that nothing is able to hold them, and therefore a Saint muſt enter into and dwell in God. Hence is that prayer of the Apoſtle for the *Epheſians*, *Chap.* 3. 19. *that they might be filled with all the fulneſs of Chriſt*; So that of our Saviour, *Matt.* 25. 21. The more an earthly portion dwells and lodgeth in the heart, the more it ſinks and deſtroyes the man: but this is our life and ſalvation, our glory and our heaven, to be full of God. Gods indwelling in the ſoul is its reſurrection, and exaltation, *Eſay* 57. 15, 16. Now for the right underſtanding hereof, you muſt know, that this indwelling of God in the ſoul, is not eſſentially, as the God-head dwelt in the humane nature of Chriſt, and made up one perſon: but myſtical and ſpiritual,

1. By lively impreſſion.
2. By gratious influx.

Firſt, God dwells in the heart by lively impreſſion: God ſtamps his own image upon the heart, and ſo lives in it, as the father lives in his child: a ſoul conform'd to God, is a ſoul full of God. Then is the ſoul taken up into the life and light of God, when it is made like to God, holy as he is holy. Then God lives in the heart, when a ſpirit of holineſs is planted in the heart; and when the lines of his glory are drawn upon it; ſo ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *John* 4. 12, 16. God is love. The love of God is his image; he that loveth truly and ſincerely, he dwelleth in God, and God in him. There are ſome that dream of an immediate viſion of God, they ſee him in his Eſſence; but ſaith *John*, *No man hath ſeen God at any time: if we*

love one another, God dwelleth in us, and we in him, i. e. If the image of Divine glory be enſtampt upon our hearts, and appears in its lively acts of grace and goodneſs, love and ſweetneſs, then have we true and cloſe communion and fellowſhip with the Father. So 1 *John* 1. 7. *If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, then have we fellowſhip one with another.* This is to ſee God, know him and enjoy him, for the ſoul to be made like to him; transformation of the ſoul into Divine ſimilitude gives it the fulleſt enjoyment of God, that it is capable of. As the ſoul is in likeneſs unto God, ſo it enjoys him. Perfection of holineſs gives the ſoul a perfect fruition of God. Saints in glory are perfectly holy, and therefore do enjoy God perfectly.

Secondly, God dwells in the heart by gratious influx; he is continually giving forth Divine virtue to a Saint; as he is a fountain of grace and goodneſs, ſo he diffuſeth ſtreams thereof into the hearts of his people; he is ever doing them good; and according to their needs, ſo doth he ſupply them; mercy flows in according to the ſtate and condition of the ſoul; ſometimes healing, ſometimes quickning, ſtrengthning, comforting, directing, and teaching; Hence is that of the Prophet; *Pſal.* 36. 8 9.

4. It appears that God is a Saints portion by his improvement of his intereſt in God: men uſually do improve, and make the beſt of their eſtates they can, that they may live the moſt comfortably upon it that may be. Saints are good huſbands, and they do not let their portion lie dead by them; but do make the beſt of it they can.

1. By

1. By Contemplation.
2. By Supplication.
3. By Application.

First, By Contemplation, a Saint takes great delight to behold God, not essentially as he is in his own beauty and purity; for so none can see God, and live; but manifestatively, as he is pleased to reveal himself in his Son Jesus: so *John* 1. 18. When the Lord Jesus doth declare his Father to the soul, it is a ravishing sight; Even as a worldly man takes great delight to look upon his estate, to see his bags of money, his Barns of Grain, his cattle in his pasture; he feeds his mind upon them: so doth the soul of a gratious man feed it self upon God by contemplation, *Psal.* 104. 34. *my meditation of him shall be sweet.* It was like sweet meats to the Prophets taste. So *Psal.* 139. 17, 18, *how precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God, &c.* I am still with thee, *i. e.* I think on thee in the night, and wake with thee in the morning; and wherever I go, and wherever I am, still my mind is on thee, and every thought is admirable and exceeding precious to me; a true Christian had rather spend an hour with God in Contemplation, and Divine Meditation, then Eternity with the world; this feeds his soul, and delights his heart, and takes up his spirit; Well might the Apostle say, to be spiritually minded is life and peace; No such life, no such peace as flows in this way.

Secondly, By Supplication; the more he enjoys of God the larger are his desires after God. He must be ever sucking and drawing at Divine breasts, he goeth to God for all he wants, and

the more he receives the more he craves; grace widens the heart and draws out the ſpirit; ſo that a Chriſtian never thinks he hath enough. He drinks, and drinks, and yet he is the more thirſty: he prays continually and without ceaſing; for one prayer begets another. As a man that hath an eſtate firſt calls for one thing, and then for another: and the uſe of one makes him deſire another, and more of all. So he that hath an intereſt in God firſt ſeeks one grace, and then another: and the uſe of one grace puts him upon the begging of another. He wants knowledge, and he begs that, but knowledge without humility puffs up, and this makes him beg the grace of humility; he begs ſtrength, I, but without faithfulneſs and skill to lay it forth it profits not; and therefore he muſt have that: he prays for wiſdom and fidelity to uſe his ſtrength. As graces are linked and combined together for uſe and helpfulneſs each to other; ſo are the ſouls deſires, like to haſty meſſengers, ready to tread upon one anothers heels. A Chriſtian ſomtimes is big with twins of holy deſires, and one comes firſt to the birth, and yet another (like to *Pharez*) ſteps forth, and makes a breach upon it. It is excellent to ſee, how the ſoul gets ground ſtill, and goeth on ſtill further and further by 'its deſires. As thriving men, firſt buy one piece of land and then another, until they have inlarged their territories to a mighty compaſs: ſo do Chriſtians inlarge their graces and comforts. It is with a Chriſtian, as it is recorded of the rain that fell in *Ahabs* time at the prayer of *Elijah*, 1 *King.* 18. 44. ſo a Chriſtians deſires and returns are little

at

at the firſt: but they greaten and greaten until they overſpread the whole heavens of the ſoul. *Matth. 7. 7, ask, and ye ſhall receive, ſeek and ye ſhall find, knock and it ſhall be opened unto you*; Here is a gradation; the ſoul proceeds by ſteps, and accordingly receives; and as the ſoul ariſes higher and higher in its deſires and affections, ſo grace ariſeth higher and higher in its anſwers. A prayerful ſoul comes at laſt to be a graceful ſoul; Thou that art much with God in prayer, ſhalt have much of God in thine heart. As the Sun draws forth vapours from the earth, not for it ſelf, but to fatten the earth: ſo God draws forth the deſires of the ſoul, not to better, or to add any thing to his own being or happineſs, but to better the ſoul, and to add to its happineſs and to make it compleat.

Thirdly, By Application the ſoul improves God. A true Chriſtian makes an advantage of all Divine incomes and enjoyments; ſo that he encreaſes dayly with the increaſe of God. As a worldly man turns the peny, and makes it double, and at laſt an hundred-fold; ſo doth a Chriſtian: he hath an heavenly art, whereby he trades with, and grows rich in all goodneſs; His four talents brings him eight, & his five gains him ten; A Chriſtians grace lies not dead by him, and of no uſe, but is dayly put forth into act and increaſeth: The more he enjoys of God, the more he acteth for God, and the better he thrives: Prayer fetcheth in, and love lays out, until the man grows wonderfully rich; and gains a wonderful ſtock within himſelf.

Uſe, 1. *By way of inference; and hence we may infer.*

Firſt, That the people of God are the richeſt people; they have the beſt portion the beſt inheritance. So the Prophet accounts it, *Pſal.* 16. 5, 6. *The Lord is my portion; the lines are fallen unto me in a pleaſant place; Yea, I have a goodly heritage.* A goodly heritage; the beſt that can be had; the fulleſt, the richeſt, and the moſt delightful. Saints have *Benjamins* portion, a meſs five times ſo much as the worldling's is; All is a Saints; for they have God who is all; What though they are ſometimes very poor in a worldly reſpect, yet they are wonderfully rich in an heavenly reſpect. 2 *Cor.* 6. 18. *Jam* 2. 5. A Chriſtian is a meer paradox and heavenly riddle; he hath nothing, and he hath All; he is poor and rich. *Levi* had no portion amongſt the tribes, and yet had the beſt eſtate, for God was his portion. Alaſs, a worldlings portion is but a dark ſhadowy repreſentation of a Saints portion; his houſe and land, his food and rayment, his money and Jewels, are but figures and reſemblances of a Chriſtians eſtate; There was far more difference between *Solomons* ſtables and out houſes for his horſes and beaſt to ſtand in, and *Solomons* Ivory Throne, or Temple whereon *Solomon* laid out all his glory, than there is between the richeſt worldlings portion and a Saints. We are exceeding apt to ſay of ſuch a man, He is wonderfully rich, he hath a vaſt eſtate, he is worth ſo many thouſands by the year; or he is a Prince in ſuch a Dominion, and a mighty man; but alaſs he is not to be compared with one of Gods poor Saints;

A Christian that hath not a peny in his purse, nor a rag to cover his nakednes, nor a bit of bread to put in his mouth, is infinitely richer, then all the Princes and Potentates of the earth; For God is the portion of his Saints, *Psal.* 37. 16.

Secondly, That the people of God are a truly happy people. So saith the Prophet, *Psal.*144.15. Men account them happy that have *aurum in area*; but they are truly happy, that have *Deum in conscientia*. *Aug. to 9.p.48.*

For what is true happines? Why, it is the enjoyment of good commensurate to all our desires. Now this is the happines of Saints; they have a good commensurare to; yea, and infinitely beyond all their desires. God is better to them, then they wish for or desire; He exceeds the utmost bounds of the largest heart. God often gives his Saints more then they ask, and yet the enjoyment of God, is beyond all his gifts. Saints know not to the full, what they ask, when they beg to be filled with all the fulnes of God, and when God is enjoyed by them, they scarce know what they have. These now must needs be happy, even to admiration. We may well say, O the happinesses of that man, whose portion is the Lord.

Thirdly, That the people of God cannot be made miserable; as they are happy, so they are eternally happy, for they have a durable and eternal portion; worldly men are at a great uncertainty, they may be externally happy to day, and very

miſerable to morrow; Nay in a moment a curſe comes upon them like an Eaſtern wind, and blaſts them irrecoverably; but of the righteous we may ſay as *Iſaac* concerning *Jacob*, he is bleſſed, and he ſhall be bleſſed; bleſſed to day, and bleſſed to morrow and for ever. A Saints eſtate is out of danger and hazzard: 'tis a treaſure that can't be plundered by thieves, nor devoured by moths, nor corrupted by ruſt, nor taken away by unjuſt dealings: 'tis a ſure and undeſeiſable eſtate: nay 'tis an eſtate that can't be ſpent. A Chriſtian may live at as high a rate as poſſible he can; through faith and prayer, and yet he can't live at the height of it; he can't leſſen or diminiſh it: the meal in the bowl, and the oyl in the cruſe will never be ſpent. Worldly men never ſink in their eſtates until they come to ſpend of the ſtock; if they can but keep the Wolf from the door, they care not: 'tis ſo with a godly man; his ſtock and his portion holds, whatever he ſpends he ſpends not that.

Uſe, 2. *For inſtruction*; *Is God the portion of* Iſrael, *then this may teach us*,

1. Where to have a portion for our ſelves and ours; Why, by making ſure of God; Alaſs, many perſons are plotting about an eſtate and a portion for themſelves, and their children, but God is not all their thoughts: and oftentimes it falleth out as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks. *Pſal.* 146. 4, that whilſt he is contriving and laying out his heart in this deſign, his breath goeth forth, he returneth to the earth, and in that very day his thoughts periſh; he dies a beggar, miſerably poor in eſtate, both for body and ſoul, and leaves his children nothing but

an

an inheritance of their fathers ſin, and it may be the curſe of God for it; that whilſt he is roaring in hell, they are poſting thither as faſt as they can to increaſe his torments and make them more intolerable: But however, if it falls not out thus, that thou art defeated in thy deſign; but thou ſcrapeſt up an earthly portion for thy ſelf, and leaveſt that to thy children, what is this to the enjoyment of God? Oh, what can compenſate the loſs of God? Not the whole world if thou hadſt it; For alaſs, this earthly portion, is not the ſouls portion; I may help and relieve the body, but can do no good to the ſoul; that is poor, wretched, and miſerable, without the enjoyment of God; the ſoul hath nothing to live upon, whilſt it is without God; Now, what, muſt thy body be preferr'd above thy ſoul? Thy body, that is cloathed, fed, delighted, and kept ſafe; I, but thine immortal ſoul is laid naked, ſtarved, and miſerable. 'Tis poſſible for thee, through the deluſions of Satan and the corruption of the fleſh, that thou mayſt ſhuffle on a while; I, but when thy naked ſoul ſhall ſit trembling upon thy lips, and ask thee this one queſtion? Now whither muſt I go? What portion is for me? What canſt thou anſwer? Thou dar'ſt not ſay as *Dives* ſaid, *ſoul take thine eaſe, thou haſt goods laid up for many years:* For alaſs, thy ſoul then takes its leave of all earthly goods, when it takes its flight from thy body, and if it hath not God for its portion to go to, it hath nothing to live upon, no harbour nor ſhelter to keep it from that eternal ſtorm of Divine wrath which is ſhowred down from God upon it. I have heard it as one

of

of the ſaddeſt complaints of ſome women, when their husbands were ready to die, that they had not an houſe to put their heads in, nor a friend to go to, and it may be little or nothing to help and relieve themſelves; and it may be the next news is, that they are thrown into priſon for their husbands debts. Why truly it is the godleſs ſouls caſe: that when the body dies, the ſoul hath no habitation provided for it; but muſt ſpeedily go to the common Goal, to be there kept as a miſerable priſoner, bound with the chains of eternal darkneſs, and to feed upon ſoul devouring flame of Divine vengeance to all Eternity.

O friends, will not you be ſo wiſe therefore as to look out in time for a ſure portion for your ſouls; even for a God. Oh, live no longer godleſs, for ſo long as thou liveſt without God, thou haſt no proviſion made for thy ſoul.

2. This may teach us, that if we would have God to be our portion, we muſt be Gods *Iſrael*, and Gods portion: as thou wouldeſt have God to be thine, ſo thou muſt be the Lords. Full is that of the ſpouſe, *Cant.* 2. 16. *my beloved is mine, and I am his*; The intereſt between God and his people, comes to be mutual. So *Pſal.* 33. 12. Thou canſt never truly ſay, that the Lord is thy God, until thou canſt ſay, thou art the inheritance of the Lord; Thou art never ſure of God as thy portion, until God hath made ſure of thee for his inheritance: He muſt have ſome intereſt in thy heart, or thou haſt no fruition of him.

Firſt, Therefore, Set thy heart upon God alone,

lone, do not ſuffer it to be divided between many portions; let not the earthly portion ſhare one part, and ſin another, and the Devil another, and then what is left thou wilt be content that God ſhould have it; But know, that God will be all or none; the love of the world and the love of God is inconſiſtent; 1 *John* 2. 15. You know when the Merchant had found the pearl, he ſells all for it; and ſo muſt thou; thy heart muſt be taken off all for God, and given up to him only. God never matches with an adultereſs, with one that doth not love him intirely: For then he would be but as a cloak for wickedneſs to hide it ſelf under, that it may be acted with greater ſecurity; As men that marry whores, they are but their wife's cloaks, they commit whoredom with the greater boldneſs; ſo would the heart of man, if it could enjoy God with the love of the world; it would ſin the more ſecurely and freely. God ſhould be but a cloak to its wickedneſs. No, thou muſt not think, that God will be thy portion, that thou mayſt play the harlot the more ſecurely; Oh, therefore ſet thine heart upon God alone; let him have the whole of thine heart; ſet thy heart wide open for God to come in, and take poſſeſſion of thy heart. *Pſal.* 24. 7. *This is the voice of Chriſt; open to me my ſiſter, my ſpouſe; Cant.* 5. 2, and, *Behold, I ſtand at the door and knock, if any man open, I will come in.* Now love to God is the opening of the heart to God, and lets him in, entertains him, and bids him welcome. Thus God dwells in the heart, and receives content and ſatisfaction from it.

Secondly, If thou wouldſt be Gods portion, and

and Gods inheritance; thou muſt receive Gods mark upon thee, that thou mayſt be diſtinguiſhed from all others; even as they that become the portion of Antichriſt muſt receive his mark in their foreheads, and in their hands. *Revel.* 13.16. So all they that do become Gods portion, muſt receive Gods mark upon them; they muſt be ſealed with Gods own ſeal, *Epheſ.* 1.13. and *Revel.* 14. 1. Even as Merchants ſet their mark or ſeal upon their goods, ſo doth God ſet his ſeal and mark upon all his goods, that they may be clearly known to him by their mark, as well as in his own decree. Now the diſtinguiſhing Character of a true *Iſraelite* from all others is Goſpel ſincerity, truth in the inward parts, *Joh.* 1. 47, a true *Iſraelite* in whom is no guile, *Revel.* 14. 15, in their mouth was found no guile, *Pſal.* 32. 2. Others may have gifts, and grace in ſhew, but Gods portion muſt have grace in truth; Others may have a form, but theſe have the power of godlineſs; Others may have lamps, but theſe have oyl in their lamps; Others may have a name, but theſe have the name of God written in their foreheads. Alaſs, God cares not for theſe hang-bies, who call themſelves by Gods name, and cry up themſelves as the only people of God, and yet never received the name of God upon their foreheads: but through a carnal liberty, which they aſſume to themſelves are on and off, in and out, when they pleaſe. Sometimes they are for God, and ſometimes for the Devil. No, Beloved, if you will be the Lords, you muſt be in good earneſt; fully engaged, mark'd out with this mark of holy ſincerity, ſo that God may have

ſome-

ſomething in you, whereby to own you. When God ſhall look abroad, and ſeek for his own, and find them ſcattered up and down, and mixed with the world, God will take notice of none, but ſuch as have his mark upon them, none but ſuch as are ſincere and upright; 'tis not a form of Anabaptiſm, or Quaking, or Seeking, but ſincerity, that God will own, *Matth.* 7. 21, 22, 23.

Uſe, 3. *For Direction and Counſel to all the* Iſrael *of God, who have God for their portion.*

I have four words of advice for you.

1. Learn the diſtinction to the height; God in himſelf, or God in the creature, and the creature without God. There is a vaſt difference between the enjoyment of God in himſelf, or in the creature, and the enjoyment of the creature, without the enjoyment of God. Some enjoy God, and not the creature, Some enjoy the creature, and not God, Some enjoy both. This is talked of amongſt us, and oftentimes little underſtood by us; but the right and clear underſtanding hereof, is of great concerment unto Chriſtians.

1. Some enjoy God and not the creature; theſe are (as I hinted before) poor and rich.

2. Some enjoy the creature and not God, theſe are rich, and yet poor; as having all, and yet having nothing.

3. Some enjoy God, and the creature; or God in the creature; Theſe are rich in all reſpects; they are worldly rich, and heavenly rich, they have a double portion. But now here lieth a great task and difficulty: it is hard for ſuch a Chri-

Christian so to distinguish between these two estates and portions, as not to confound them. As a man that drives two trades; 'tis very difficult for him to keep them distinct: So 'tis here, when men have much of the world, & they drive a great trade therein, 'tis very difficult for them to distinguish between God, and that, *i. e.* so to use the world, as not to make it his All; hence is that counsel of the Apostle, 1 *Cor.*7.29,30,31, and so 1 *Tim.* 6.17,18. Oh, Beloved, for a Christian to be still in the enjoyment of all, as if he had nothing, this is right; to live in a constant dependance upon God as his All, and to make the creature but as the vessel or cistern through which God communicates himself: this is a true life; Such an one may say as *Paul, I am dead, nevertheless I live; I am dead to the world, and the world is dead to me*; such an one lives upon God, a true life of happiness and content. But I say, this is hard and difficult: and our experience is a full demonstration thereof: for according to creature enjoyments so we live; for when the creature is full, and all things flow in according to our desire, then we are quiet, merry and glad, but when that is low and dry then we fail and flag. Few Christians have and keep an even temper of spirit in fluctuating & various conditions: for few live so upon God, as to make him their All; and therefore when the creature ebbs and flows, it carries them along in the stream, either high or low: but this is to make God our portion, for Christians to make a real distinction, between the enjoyment of God, and the enjoyment of the creature; so that when all goes, yet the heart is born up in the enjoyment of God, as *Habakkuk*

habkuk was; *Hab.*3. 17. And alſo when all is enjoyed, God may have the glory *Deut.* 3. and praiſe of all; *Deut.* 6. 9, 10, 11. O 8,10,11. Beloved, maintain a conſtant ſenſe of Divine fulneſs upon your ſpirits; 'tis not enough for a Chriſtian to make God his All: and to know him to be ſo, but to preſent God thus always to his mind and ſpirit; What is it for a man to be worth a vaſt eſtate, if he be unmindful of it? though he be never ſo rich, yet he looks upon himſelf as poor, and ſo lives a dejected and a diſconſolate life; Thus it is with a Chriſtian; though he makes God his portion, yet if he be unmindful of God, his comfort will fade and fall. And ſo on the other ſide, when he is full of the creature, his heart will be too much elevated, and puffed up, if he forgetteth him who filleth all in all; forgetfulneſs of God either raiſeth a man too high, or elſe caſts him down too low; he that forgets God, will either be proud or elſe deſpondent.

2. Is God your portion; then be content with ſuch things as you have, *Heb.* 13.5. What though thou haſt not enough in the world, yet thou haſt enough in God; and though thou haſt not a ſelf-ſufficiency, yet thou haſt an All-ſufficiency; God is thine All. Let not this trouble thee, that the world can't be a God unto thee, or that thou haſt not all, that the world can afford thee in kind: for thou haſt more in God. Remember this, that the life of man conſiſts not in the abundance of riches, *Luk.*12.15. Thou canſt neither live upon them, nor prolong thy life by them; thou canſt neither comfort thy ſelf with them, if God withdraws, nor increaſe them without his word of bleſſing; but con-

contentation with a little is great riches, if God presents himself to thee in it, as thine All. O therefore murmure not, repine not, fret not thy self, because the stream is low, when as thou hast the fountain that can never be drawn dry.

3. Be not solicitously or distrustfully careful for what you want; the presence of God will fully supply the absence of any creature; thou hast enough to live upon, when all created comforts fail thee: Hence is that of the Apostle, *Phil.*4.6. God will not suffer thee to want any good that is needful for thee. *Psa.*34.9,10. What thou canst not enjoy in the creature, thou shalt enjoy in God himself. A Christians motto may be this; *Nil habeo, nil careo, nil curo, I have nothing*; self-denyal hath outed me of all; all is to him as nothing: *I want nothing*; for he hath all in God: *I take care for nothing*; for he looks upon God for his provision. A carking solicitous man takes Gods office out of his hand: for God hath made it his work to take the care of his people; and hath made it their duty to be careful for nothing, 1 *Pet.*5.7. There is a double care.

1. *Cura officii.*
2. *Cura eventus.*

First, There is a care of duty; and so every man is bound to labour in that calling wherein God hath set him carefully and industriously; 'Tis not only lawful, but our duty to make provisions for back and belly, for our selves and others; So *Rom.* 12.17, & 1 *Tim.*5.8.

Secondly, There is a care of event; and so we ought to be without care; we are to look at God for the event and issue of all, and for a blessing upon all; conscience of duty, and faith in God, are

to

to be inſeperably conjoyned; we muſt uſe the means and yet look beyond it. Neglect of means is diſobedience, and diſtracting care about the iſſue is infidelity; two rocks on which the ſoul is apt to ſplit, if not rightly ſteered by a Divine hand.

4. Is God your portion; then above all be thankful for the enjoyment of God; every gift that cometh down from God requires thanks? but much more when God gives thee himſelf; in every thing give thanks (ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Theſſ.*5.18.) *For this is the will of God*; but how much ſhould our hearts be enlarged with thanks and praiſe for the incomes of God himſelf? as the enjoyment of good is the object of thanks: ſo our thanks ſhould be proportioned to the good enjoyed; the higheſt good, ſhould have the higheſt praiſe; So *David*, *Pſal.*118.28. *Thou art my God, I will praiſe thee, thou art my God, I will exalt thee.*

SERMON II.

PSAL. LXXIII. XXVI.

My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

WE have raised two Doctrines out of these words.

1. That God is the Rock or Strength of an *Israelites* heart, and his portion for ever.

2. That Divine relief flows from God to his people, according to their necessity.

We have dispatcht the first of these, and shall now proceed to the Second.

That Divine relief flows from God to his people according to their necessity. When flesh and heart faileth, then God is the strength of their heart, and portion; When the old stock is almost spent, God renews it again; When the fire is almost out, he throws on new fewel; When the old house is falling upon our heads, he underprops it; When the Cistern fails, the Conduit shall run; In plain English, when a Christian stands in great-

est

eſt need of relief and help, God will communicate the moſt of himſelf to him. God oftentimes leads his people, as he did *Abraham*, to the top of the mount of trials, temptations and afflictions, and then appears to them in grace and goodneſs, that they may ſet up their ſtone and write *Jehova Jireh* upon it; the Lord will be ſeen.

Now for the more methodical handling this Doctrine, I ſhall do theſe three things.

1. Conſider the particular caſes, wherein a Chriſtian ſtands in need of relief.

2. Shew you how relief flows from God to Chriſtians in thoſe caſes.

3. Give you the grounds and reaſons thereof.

Firſt, For the caſes wherein a Chriſtian ſtands in need of relief: and theſe are reducible to two heads, according to the Prophet here in our Text.

1. Failing of the fleſh.

2. Failing of the heart.

Firſt, Failing of the fleſh; and this is twofold.

1. When the comforts of a mans life fail him.

2. When the ſtrength of the outward man fails.

Secondly, There is a failing of the heart; and that is threefold,

1. When the faculties of the ſoul fail, and cannot perform their due offices; either by way of apprehenſion, election or retention.

2. When the acquired or infuſed habits of the heart are weakned, or indiſpoſed to act.

3. When the animal ſpirits are expiring, and even breathing forth.

This (as I hinted at the firſt in opening the Text) was the Prophets caſe, who pen'd this *Pſalm*; He was brought very low, even to the very pit, ready to die, ſoul and body failed; all without, and all within failed; and then God was the ſtrength of his heart, and his portion.

Firſt, Therefore, we ſhall conſider the failing of the fleſh, and how Divine relief flows from God to a Chriſtian in that caſe.

Firſt, When the external comforts of a Chriſtians life fail him, as oftentimes they do; he is ſtript naked of all worldly and ſenſual glory, happineſs and comforts: diveſted, deplumed, and diſrob'd of all external delights, pleaſures, profits and advantages whatſoever, which this life affords to render a mans ſenſitive life comfortable and happy. Why, this was *Jobs* caſe; God gave Satan a Commiſſion to ſeize on all that *Job* had; As you may ſee, *Job* 1. 12. *All that he hath is in thy power*; God reſerved nothing for *Job*, but made Satan Lord of all he had; and accordingly he dealt with *Job*; he ſtript him of all to the ſhirt upon his back: as he could not go beyond his Commiſſion, ſo he would not come ſhort of it in one punctillo: but turn'd him out of all to the wide world, to ſhift for himſelf as he could.

Object. *But ſome ſay, this was a ſingular caſe: we do not read of a parallel to it.*

Anſw. I anſwer, in ſome reſpects It may ſeem ſingular

ſingular yet in other reſpects it hath been the portion of many of the people of God: 'tis true it is not common for God to give Satan ſuch a Commiſſion: but it is very uſual for God to ſtrip his people of their external comforts, and to reduce them to a very low and diſtreſſed ſtate: The Prophet *Habakkuk* therefore propoſes ſuch a caſe to himſelf; *Chap* 3. 17. The fig-tree ſhall not bloſſome, neither ſhall fruit be in the vines: the labour of the Olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat, the flock ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no heard in the ſtalls: all means of lively-hood and ſubſiſtence cut off, a perfect famine muſt needs follow. Now when a child of God is tried with this ſoar affliction, God is the ſtrength of his heart and his portion: and this made *Habakkuk* rejoyce; *Yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of my ſalvation*; the Lord God is my ſtrength, *i. e.* what though this ſoar and moſt dreadful affliction comes, that all the comforts of our lives fail us, what though I have not a bit of bread to eat, nor a rag to cover my nakedneſs, nor any thing to ſuſtain nature with: yet as long as I have not loſt neither ſhall looſe my God, I am not troubled at it; he is the God of my Salvaion and of my ſtrength ſtill; I have a God to go to, when I have not a Field or Barn of Corn to go to for bread; and as long as I can go to God, I care not; ſo may a child of God ſay, I have a God to live upon when I have nothing in the world to live upon; I ſhall have relief from heaven in this ſtraight and exigency: *He is the God of my ſalvation.* For,

1. Then God gives in moſt of himſelf, when

he ſtrips his people of external comforts, and becomes that to a Chriſtian, which the creature would be, if enjoyed; he is their life and ſtrength in the want of a livelyhood. It is impoſſible for all the creatures, if they were all collected into one body, to ſupply the room of God; but one God can ſupply the rooms of all the creatures in the world; And Saints then enjoy moſt of God, when they enjoy the leaſt of the world. As 'tis reported of a Muſitian, who having the hap to break one of his Harp-ſtrings in the middle of his Muſick; preſently a Graſhopper leap'd upon his Harp, and moſt melodiouſly ſupplyed the place of the broken ſtring. Thus it is with the people of God; No ſooner do they break a ſtring of their inſtrument, wherewith they make themſelves Muſick: No ſooner doth any created comfort fail them, but God ſteps in, and ſupplies the place thereof, and affords that to them, which the creature did; Though *Jacob* could not be a God to *Rachel*; yet God could be to *Jacob* in ſtead of a *Rachel*. As we are oftentimes furtheſt from God, both in affection, and affiance, when the creature is preſent with us, ſo God comes the nigheſt to us, when the creature is ſet at the greateſt diſtance from us; *When my father and mother forſake me, the Lord will take me up*; ſaith *David*, *Pſal.* 27. 10. It is a ſad pill to ſwallow, for a man to be forſaken of men, much more of near and intimate friends, but moſt of all, to be forſaken of father and mother; but is there no relief to be had in this caſe? Yes. When *Davids* father and mother forſook him, God took him up; God ſupplyed the place of a father and of a mother to him;

him; Senſible withdrawings of the one, is joyned with ſenſible manifeſtations of the other; It is Gods uſual way to make up our wants in the enjoyment of himſelf, and to be to us, inſtead of all things; We looſe the drop, and then are ſure of the fountain; God is that, and much more then the creature can be to us, when it is at the full, and in its greateſt ſtrength and glory. Now ſaith God to the ſoul, I will be thy All; now I will fill thee full of my ſelf, and inrich thee with the treaſure of an infinite being; Now I will make thee ſhine with a ſurpaſſing glory, and make thee ſparkle with the Gemms and Diamonds of mine own perfections; Now I will adorn thee with thoſe robes of beauty and amiableneſs, as ſhall out-ſhine the very ſun in the firmament, and make thee beautiful in mine own eye. And is not this a ſufficient relief in the want of all ſublunary comforts? Who would not be willing to part with the one for the other? And therefore,

2. God is pleaſed to bow the heart to a free ſubmiſſion to Divine Will herein; ſo that it reſts ſatisfied, and content with its preſent ſtate and condition; Now contentment and ſatisfaction in an eſtate, be it never ſo low, and poor, makes it a comfortable and happy ſtate; What are riches if there be no contentment, but poverty? And what is poverty with contentment? Why, it is great riches; *Godlineſs with contentment is great gain*, ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 6. 6. A Chriſtian gains more, when God gives him a contented heart, then if God gave him a world without contentment; for all the world can't give him

content; to know how to want, makes a man far more happy, then to be full. O when the ſoul can ſay, Lord, I thank thee, I have learned to be content; I have as much ſatisfaction and content, as if I enjoyed the greateſt riches and honours in the world; What though I have loſt all, and have but from hand to mouth, yet I am content herewith. I can ſtill bleſs thee, though thou haſt taken away all my out-ward bleſſings. So doth *Job*, *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken, bleſſed be the name of the Lord:* Wants with a thankful, God-praiſing heart are a greater bleſſing, then fulneſs with an unthankful ſpirit; and it is a greater mercy for God to give a thankful ſpirit, in a low condition, then to advance a man to the higheſt pinnacle of outward proſperity in the world; This I ſay, is a bleſſed relief, that cauſeth the ſoul to bleſs God in the want of all outward comforts.

3. When God is pleaſed to ſtrip a Chriſtian of all his outward comforts, he gives in a greater meaſure of faith, that he may depend upon God, for a ſupply; So that, though he hath nothing to live upon, yet he is ſure, he ſhall not want; for true faith, looks not at ſecondary cauſes ſo much as at the word of promiſe: and therefore if all means fail, yet as long as the promiſe fails not, a believing ſoul knows, that it ſhall have a ſupply, although it cannot imagine how or which way ſhe ſhall have it. Now inward ſupports in time of want, and ſecret intimations of a ſupply from God in his own way and time are a ſweet relief to the ſoul in that condition; So ſaith *David*, *I had fainted, unleſs I had believed, to ſee the goodneſs of*

the

the Lord in the land of the living, Pſal. 27. 13. True faith in God will keep the heart alive when a man hath nothing to live upon; and 'tis Gods way to fix a Chriſtian moſt upon the objects of faith, when the objects of ſenſe are removed from him; when a Chriſtian lives leaſt by ſight then he lives moſt by faith. Now as a Chriſtian believes, ſo comfort flows in to him; Faith is to a Chriſtian in ſtead of all things; for it is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, *Heb.* 11. 1. What ever a man wants, yet if he believes truly, he hath the ſubſtance of that, which he hopes for; A Chriſtian hopes for great things, greater comforts, more enlargments, and heaven at laſt. Why faith is the ſubſtance of all; He that lives by faith hath the ſubſtance of heaven to live upon; and that muſt needs be a ſweet relief to the ſoul, in a time of need. It is the Chriſtians comfort, that he hath a durable, and a laſting ſtate, that will never fail him; and that he hath a God to go to, that will not fail him; but will give him ſuch an allowance, as ſhall maintain him, till he comes to his journeys end, where he ſhall be put into a full poſſeſſion, and fruition of it.

4. Thoſe ſmall repaſts, which come from the hand of Divine Providence to uphold a Chriſtian under his wants, are filled ſo full of Divine Bleſſing and ſtrength that he can truly ſay, I have enough. A man would think that pulſe and water would afford but little nouriſhment: I, but Divine Bleſſing filled it full of ſtrength, that *Daniel* felt no want of better chear. Let a Raven be the Prophets Caterer, and if Divine Bleſſing attends the proviſion (as it did) he ſhall walk in the ſtrength

ſtrength thereof forty days, and not faint. Though poor Chriſtians in theſe days do not live upon Divine miracles, yet they live upon Divine wonders, that makes them ſometime wonder how they live; they cannot but ſee a Divine hand in giving what they have, and then in bleſſing it beyond expectation; for though they want much of that which others do enjoy, yet they enjoy that which others want: and this makes them healthful and chearful in their wants. There is many a poor Chriſtian, that hath more joy in one day, then thouſands that enjoy the treaſure of the earth; and why? It proceeds from this very ground; the good mans little is given in love, with a heart-chearing bleſſing: while the wicked mans plentiful eſtate is given in wrath, and with a curſe upon it: hence is that of *Solomon*, *Prov.* 15. 16. *Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, then great treaſure and trouble therewith, i. e.* they that fear the Lord, have not that trouble with their little, which they that do not fear the Lord have, with their great treaſure, and therefore the good mans little, is better then the wicked mans great treaſure. The good mans little comes with a bleſſing, for a bleſſing reſts upon a good man, and all that he hath be it little or much; Now a Divine bleſſing ever gives ſtrength and vertue to any means; Let it be never ſo poor and weak of it ſelf, yet Divine Bleſſing makes it mighty and efficacious: ſo that it is no matter, what a Chriſtian hath to live upon, if the bleſſing of God goeth along with it.

5. When God ſtrips a good man of all he hath he

he then pours forth a mighty ſpirit of prayer for a fulneſs of grace to maintain the life of holineſs in this eſtate. He that hath nothing without to live upon, and but a ſmall ſtock of grace within will have much ado to rub through; and a gracious ſoul is ſenſible hereof, and therefore God is pleaſed to draw out the deſires of his ſoul, after a greater meaſure, then yet he hath attained; and indeed when outward wants meet with a ſoul that is full of grace, they do not make ſuch an impreſſion upon it, as when they meet with one, that hath but little; the empty veſſel makes the greateſt noiſe, and empty Chriſtians are fulleſt of complaints, until a ſpirit of prayer is poured forth upon them, whereby they attain an inward fulneſs: and this keeps and maintains a ſpirit of holineſs in them. I confeſs he that proſpers and thrives in the world, ſtands in need of a large meaſure of grace, to keep his heart holy in that eſtate, and ſo he that is low in the world, ſtands in need of a great meaſure of grace alſo, or elſe he may miſcarry. There is one eminent rock, upon which poor people are very apt to ſplit, and hazzard their immortal ſouls; and that is the uſe of indirect and unlawful means, for their relief and ſubſiſtence in the world; Hence is that prayer of *Agur*, *Prov.* 30. 6, 7, *give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me, leaſt I be full, and deny thee, and ſay Who is the Lord? Or leaſt I be poor, and ſteal, and take the name of my God in vain.* Mark this, leaſt I be poor and ſteal; Noting out, that poverty hath this temptation attending it, if grace prevents not; poor men will be prompted to uſe ſome indirect courſe for

for their ſubſiſtence; they'l ſteal, rather then want what they deſire; I, but a good man dare not do thus; This in him would be not only a breach of the eighth command, but alſo of the third; It is a taking the name of God in vain; for this is a certain truth, that whoſoever takes upon him the profeſſion of Chriſtian Religion, and yet departs not from iniquity, *he takes the name of God in vain*: now a true Chriſtian in whom the fear of the Lord is planted dreads this; and therefore crys mightily unto God to keep and preſerve him, that he may not do ſo unworthy an act, as to relieve himſelf by an indirect courſe; for he would not take the name of God upon him in vain; he had rather die then do it. Now when God hath thus drawn out the deſires of the ſoul after grace, then he gives in ſuch a meaſure as ſhall preſerve it, and keep it from yielding to the temptation; and Beloved, it is a gratious relief to be kept in an holy and gratious frame of heart under a ſtrong and powerful temptation: 'tis worthy of a Chriſtians taking notice thereof; So doth the Prophet; this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him; *Pſal.* 34. 6. Beloved, if you be never ſo poor, yet if God draws out your hearts after him in prayer, you ſhall be kept, that you ſhall not take any indirect courſe to help your ſelves, but be able to ſay, as *David* of himſelf, *this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.* As prayer is the deſire of the ſoul, formed into requeſts and petitions, ſo crying is the importunity of the ſoul in prayer; Petitions and requeſts preſented to God with an humble and reverential boldneſs; it is a wreſtling with God for a bleſſing: a perſeve-

ſeverance in prayer with an holy reſolution not to be put off. Now 'tis the poor that thus crys; ſenſe of want, that pinches the ſoul, joyned with ſome hopes of obtaining, makes the ſoul to cry, and he that crys ſhall be heard; Divine relief ſhall come in to help it, in this time of need. Thus you ſee how relief comes in to a good man in the want of all outward comforts.

Secondly, When the ſtrength of the outward man fails. And this is properly the failing of the fleſh, when a man is in a conſumptive condition; God ſmites the body and then the fleſh waſts, the beauty thereof fades, and the ſenſes grow dull, and heavy; The Prophet *David* had great experience hereof: and therefore often mentions it in his *Pſalms*, *Pſal.* 38. 10. *my ſtrength faileth*, and *Pſal.* 109. 24. *my fleſh faileth of fatneſs*, and *Pſal.* 69. 3. *mine eyes fail*; *He was brought low*; *even to the mouth of the grave:* but Divine relief came in; As you may ſee, *Pſal.* 116. 6. *I was brought low, and he helped me.* God ſometimes raiſes a man from the very gates of death, and gives him a new life, reſtores him to his former health and ſtrength. But if God doth not thus by a gratious man, yet he ſhall have cauſe to ſay, the Lord is the ſtrength of my heart in this weak and low eſtate and condition. Divine relief ſhall be given to him,

1. To ſupport and ſtrengthen him to bear his affliction with patience: the power and grace of God is wonderfully ſeen, in bearing up the ſpirits, when the body ſinks, and in giving grace to exerciſe patience, under the pains and ſorrows of death; you have heard (ſaith Saint *James*) of the

the patience of *Job*, *Jam.* 5. 11. As you heard of his corporal affliction, how ſoatly he was handled; ſo you have heard of his patience, how graciouſly he was he was ſupported, that he could bear his affliction without thurmuring or repining: 'tis true it made him groan, I, but the ſtroke was heavier then his groaning, As he ſaith, *Job* 23. 2. *Even to day is my complaint bitter, my ſtroke is heavier, then my groaning.* The ſpirit of a man will ſuſtain corporal infirmities, when God ſuſtains the ſpirit. Now patience under afflictions is equivalent to a deliverance from them; to be able to bear an affliction is as great a mercy, as to be freed from it; if God rebukes the feavour of impatiency, and thereby cures that, it is as much as to rebuke a bodily diſtemper, and thereby to cure it; So you may ſee, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. *There hath no temptation taken you, but that which is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that you are able: but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it*, i. e. I can aſſure you, that thus far you ſhall be ſet free from your temptations & afflictions, that you ſhalbe able to bear them. This is a gratious relief; for there is no affliction, but impatiency makes a greater affliction: many afflict themſelves, when God doth not, and many afflict themſelves more, then God doth; their impatiency firſt makes their groaning heavier then their ſtroke, and then their ſtroke heavier then it is in it ſelf.

2. Divine relief and ſtrength comes into the heart of a good man in this conſumptive condition,

on, to renew the inward man as the outward man decays; So ſaith the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 4. 16. *Though our outward man periſh, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.* As God pulls down the old houſe, the houſe of clay, he frames and erects a new building, that ſhall abide for ever. So that a Chriſtian may ſay, as *Peter Martyr* ſaid when he was dying: *My body is weak, my mind is well, well for the preſent, and it will be better for the future.* The fleſh and ſpirit of a good man are like two buckets; when the fleſh goeth down, the ſpirit gets up; he is ever beſt within when he is worſt without; when the body is going down to the earth, from whence it came, the ſoul is aſcending to heaven, from whence it came; And you have a gratious promiſe for it; *Pſal.* 92. 13, 14. *Thoſe that be planted in the houſe of the Lord, ſhall flouriſh in the courts of our God. They ſhall ſtill bring forth fruit in their old age, they ſhall be fat and flouriſhing;* Old age ſhall have green fruit upon it. When the fleſh proves the moſt barren, the ſpirit is moſt fruitful: a true Chriſtian never flouriſheth ſo much, as when old age hath nipt the fleſh; and it is a lovely ſight, to ſee gray hairs, a conſumptive body, and a withered face, fat and flouriſhing in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs; to ſee Summer-fruit, upon an old tree in Winter-time: and yet thus it is with good Chriſtians; their Winter of old age is their moſt flouriſhing time. When nature is moſt ſpent, grace comes to its greateſt ſtrength and perfection; Faith ſtrongeſt, love to God and Chriſt moſt enflamed, hope moſt lively, and holineſs moſt beautiful and ſparkling;

the

the greateſt beauty in the ſoul, when the body is turning to rottenneſs and putrifaction: When the natural breath ſmells of the earth, the ſpiritual breath ſavours moſt of heaven; the eye of the ſoul moſt clear in diſcerning ſpiritual and heavenly things, when the eye of the body grows dim and dark; the hand of faith moſt ſteady to take hold on Divine promiſes, when the corporal hand ſhakes with the palſie, and the feet of the ſoul run faſteſt towards the mark, for the price of the high calling in Chriſt, when the bodily feet cannot move; So true it is, that a Chriſtian may ſay as S. *Paul* ſaid, *When I am weak, then am I ſtrong*; weak in my outward man, but ſtrong in the inward.

3. Divine relief comes in to the heart of a good man in a conſumptive condition, to conſume, waſte, and deſtroy that body of death, that he carries about him. Bodily weakneſs, and ſickneſs ſanctified, is purgative: that as the body waſts and conſumes ſo ſin waſts and conſumes; for God will not ſuffer ſin to outlive a Saint; ſin ſhall not enter into heaven with a Saint, for that would marr his joy there, as well as here: And therefore God firſt purges that out, before the ſoul can enter in; corruption cannot inherit incorruption; though God doth crown the grace of a Saint with glory; yet he will not crown the ſin and corruption of a Saint with glory. Heaven is an holy, and glorious place, and will not hold any but holy and pure ones: 'tis the pure in heart, that ſhall ſee God: Heaven is a place for none but triumphants; for ſuch as have fought the good fight of faith, and won the field, and conquered

quered Sin, Satan, and the World, and put them to flight: I, but here a Chriſtian is militant, and muſt encounter theſe three potent Adverſaries; let him but worſt theſe, and then he will not fear Death, though it be the King of terrors, and reſerved for the laſt. In this, now, the power of grace is clearly ſeen; for that directs the Arrow that Death ſhoots at the outward man, that it ſhall ſtrike through the very heart of Sin, Satan, and the World; that theſe ſhall be dead to him, as well as he dead to them. No ſooner doth a good man feel a wound in his body, but if ſanctified, if grace flows in, ſin is wounded alſo, that lies a bleeding in him. This is that which makes the children of God to rejoice in bodily weakneſs and infirmities; becauſe (when ſanctified through grace) it is a means to weaken the power of ſin in them. For a true Chriſtian bears an unfeigned and implacable hatred againſt Sin; and therefore like to *Sampſon*, can be content that the houſe may be plucked upon his own head, that his enemy Sin, may die with him. It is with the body ſpiritual, as in the body natural; there are ſome Diſeaſes that muſt be ſtarved out; ſo long as the body is pampered, the diſeaſe is nouriſhed; it muſt be brought very low, or there will be no cure. 'Tis ſo with the body ſpiritual; there are ſome ſins in good men, that muſt be ſtarv'd out. So long as there is ſtrength in the outward man, they will be ſtirring and active: God therefore is pleaſed to bring the Body low, that the Soul may get maſtery and power over them. Or like to ſome Rebels in a Caſtle, that will never yield, as long as any Proviſion is left: 'Tis ſo with Sin, it will

not yield, as long as corrupted Nature yields any Proviſion to it. And hence it is, that ſickly and weakly Chriſtians, are the moſt mortified Chriſtians.

4. When a good man is in a conſumptive condition, and begins to put one foot in the grave; it pleaſeth God to give in ſuch clear evidence of his love to him, and ſo full an aſſurance of his intereſt in eternal life, that he even longs for a diſſolution. He was a child of Grace, and an Heir before; but now God makes him an Heir apparent. Now ſo clear a light ſhines into his Soul, as doth manifeſt his adoption and Sonſhip; ſo that he can cry Abba, Father, which he could not do before. I deny not, but a true child of God, may die in a cloud, and not ſee the light of life, untill it comes in Heaven: I, but it is not alwaies thus; but ſometimes God is pleaſed to reveal his well pleaſed face to the Soul at the laſt, and not before; that ſhe can ſay, He is come, he is come. Some Chriſtians are like to Swans, that never ſing, but a little before their death; their comforts and joyes come in at the laſt. The Holy Ghoſt is the Guardian of a Chriſtians comforts, and ſometimes he deals with them, as a Guardian doth with an Heir, who is committed to his truſt: When the Heir is come to age, and is to enter upon his Eſtate; then the Guardian gives him in his Evidences to preſerve and keep himſelf. Even ſo ſometimes, when a Chriſtian is to enter upon the Inheritance of Eternal Life; the Holy Ghoſt throws him in Evidences for it, that he may carry them along with him thither. 'Tis true, 'tis the duty of all Chriſtians, to give all diligence to make

make their Calling and Election ſure; but ſome are fain to wait a long time, before they can attain to this comfort; and then when they are leaving Earth, they have a glimpſe of Heaven. When their earthly houſe of this tabernacle is crumbling down upon their heads, then God ſhews them his Building, *An Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens*; and this is a gratious relief to a dying Chriſtian, for it is a beginning of Heaven, to have a ſight of Heaven; it is comfort enough to have an aſſurance and evidence of theſe unſpeakable joyes, into which the Soul e're long ſhall enter. The Soul may then ſay, as he ſaid, when he lay upon his death-bed, putting his hand to his heart, *Hic ſat lucis*, Here is light enough. This is that which makes ſicknes and weakneſs ſo ſweet to a Chriſtian: For though the Rod ſmarts, yet he taſtes Honey at the end of it; that opens his eyes, as it did the eyes of *Jonathan*, to ſee the ſalvation of God: It is a moſt ſoveraign antidote againſt the ſting of death, that it can't kill or deſtroy the Soul, although it doth the Body. No meſſenger is more welcome than this, that comes to call him home.

5. In all the weakneſs and conſumptive condition of a good man, God doth act the part of a tender-hearted Nurſe to him; and doth tend him even as a Nurſe doth a bed-rid perſon, who is committed to her care; and is not this much? Surely he ſhall be admirably well lookt to, whom God tends. Now that God doth thus, is clear, *Pſ.* 41. 3. *The Lord will ſtrengthen him upon the bed of languiſhing, thou wilt make all his bed in his ſickneſs.* The *Hebrew* ſignifies to turn, and ſo *Arias Montanus*

renders it. As Bed-makers uſe to turn and toſs the Bed to and fro, that it it may be eaſie and ſoft to lie upon, ſo doth God deal with a good man, when he layes him upon the bed of languiſhing; he mitigates and moderates the affliction, that it may not be ſo painful and terrible to him, as elſe it would be. No Nurſe can do that for a ſick and weak perſon, that God can and doth for a good man. When a Nurſe hath turn'd the Bed, and made it as ſoft as ſhe can, that the ſick man finds a little eaſe and refreſhment; yet the Bed will quickly grow hard again, and the man as weary of it as before. But when God comes to make the Bed in our ſickneſs, he moderates the pain, and gives reſt to the bones. Many a time, when thoſe that are about him, ſtand weeping over him, to hear his groans, and to ſee him toſs and tumble in his Bed, and know not how to afford him any relief; firſt they turn him to one ſide, and then to another, but the man finds no reſt; then God ſteps in, gives a word of command, and that layes him to reſt, refreſheth and revives him: in an inſtant the pain and ſickneſs is removed, and the man thinks himſelf in a new world.

Thus you ſee how divine relief comes in to Chriſtians, in the time of their greateſt corporal weakneſs, when they are ready to deſpair of all help therein. Sometimes by divine ſupports inabling to bear it with patience; as alſo by renewing the inward man, and making that to thrive and flouriſh. Sometimes ſo ſanctifying it, as that it proves the effectual death and decay of the old man in him. Sometimes giving him a

ſweet

ſweet foretaſt of Heaven, in clearing up the evidence of Gods love to him: and ſometimes by mitigating and moderating the pain and grief wherewith he is afflicted. In ſome, or all theſe wayes, good men have experience of the incomes of divine relief in this condition.

And thus much for the firſt particular, wherein I have ſhewn you, how God is the ſtrength of a Chriſtians heart, when the fleſh faileth.

Secondly, Let us conſider the failing of the Heart, and ſee how divine relief comes into a good man in this caſe. Now this failing of the Heart, I reduced to three Heads.

1. The failing of the natural faculties; and that either by way of Apprehenſion, or Election, or Retention. I call them Natural Faculties, although they are ſanctified and changed: for Grace doth not alter and change the eſſence of the Soul, but only the quality and inclination thereof. Now, though they are thus altered, yet they may fail a man in whom true grace is,

1. In reſpect of Apprehenſion: The Underſtanding is the eye of the Soul, whereby it ſeeth, and diſcerneth ſpiritual objects; I, but ſometimes the eye grows dim, ſo that though he be a child of light, yet he may walk in darkneſs, as you have it, *Eſ.* 50. 10. *Who is there among you, that feareth the Lord, that walketh in darkneſs and hath no light?* Sometimes God is pleaſed to withdraw, or cloud up the light, and then though the eye be open, yet the ſoul is in the dark; the day of divine diſcoveries and manifeſtations may be turned into a dark night: But ſometimes the light ſhineth clearly upon the Soul, and yet for want

of a capacity to receive it, the Soul is in the dark ſtill: as when the eye is ſhut, a man ſeeth no more, then he doth, when the light is withdrawn from him; and this was the caſe of the Pen-man of this Pſalm, as he confeſſeth of himſelf, *ver.* 22. *So fooliſh was I, and ignorant, I was as a beaſt before thee.* You know, whatever light of Reaſon is offered to a bruit, it receiveth it not; becauſe it is beyond its faculty and power: Read a Lecture of Philoſophy to it, and render it as plain as it can be made, yet it underſtands nothing thereof. Even thus the Prophet complains of himſelf, That he was as a Bruit, that underſtood not. It was not for want of light ſhining, but for want of a ſeeing eye. He could not receive the light, and therefore was very much in the dark, and that in reference to three things,

1. In reſpect of his own ſpiritual ſtate, and therefore miſtook that. He thought it bad, although it was good; for ſo he ſaith, *ver.* 13. *Verily I have cleanſed my hands in vain, and waſhed my hands in innocency*, i. e. All my Religion is to no purpoſe; it doth not at all advantage me, that I have lived ſtrictly according to the commands of God; I might have ſpared a great deal of pains, that I have taken to cleanſe my heart, and to waſh my hands, and have ſped as well. For notwithſtanding all this, *I have been plagued all the day long, and chaſtened every morning*, ver. 14. Surely, had God loved me, had I belonged to him, he would never have dealt thus with me.

2. In reference to the ſpiritual ſtate of others; and therefore miſtook that. He thought the ſtate of the fooliſh better then his own, becauſe they

ſeemed

ſeemed to proſper, *ver.* 3. *For I was envious at the fooliſh, when I ſaw the proſperity of the wicked.* As he concluded his own eſtate bad, ſo he concluded their's good: He was ſo miſtaken, that he could have been content to have exchanged ſtates with them; and yet had he done ſo, he had made a bad bargain for himſelf.

3. In reference to God's mind, touching his duty under this complexed providence, he knew not what to do; but was at a great loſs, exceedingly bewildred in his own thoughts, through that darkneſs, that had overſpread his underſtanding; and nothing leſs can be implied in theſe words, *I was at a beaſt before thee*, i. e. I knew not how to carry, or behave my ſelf toward God; but acted very ſtrangely and prepoſterouſly, as one that had no command of himſelf, or of his paſſions: and this is the caſe ſometimes of God's dear children; they are ſo darkened in their Spirits, as that they know neither how to judge of things, nor how to act under divine diſpenſations. And hence flow miſapprehenſions of themſelves, falſe concluſions of divine providence, and croſs actings to divine will.

Thus you ſee this particular caſe; Let us now ſee, what divine relief flows into the Soul herein.

1. In time of the greateſt darkneſs that is upon the Spirit of a Chriſtian, when 'tis dark night with him, when he meets with the darkeſt and moſt croſs diſpenſation of divine providence, that he concludes againſt himſelf, and the goodneſs of his eſtate; then God is bringing about ſome glorious eminent deſign for his good. The more glorious any deſign of God is, and the more it

tends to the good of any Soul, the more it is kept ſecret, and the leſs the Soul diſcerns it, until it be wrought out. There is many a good man that fears, that God is ſetting himſelf in battel array againſt him, and ſhooting the arrows of his diſpleaſure and indignation at him, and that the full vials of his wrath ſhall be poured forth upon him; and yet at that time, God is bringing about ſome eminent deſign of good for him. It may be, thou art queſtioning thy eſtate, and concludeſt againſt thy ſelf, but God is about to clear it up to thee: Thou doubteſt of God's love, and he is making way for the manifeſtation of it. Thou art labouring under ſtrong temptations, and conflicts with ſtrong corruptions: I, but God is giving in a glorious conqueſt, and treading Satan under thy feet; that which thou feareſt will prove thy deſtruction, ſhall be thy ſalvation. God often works (as *Luther* ſaith) *in mediis contrariis*, by contrary means: God heals by wounds, and makes alive by killing; ſo that a Chriſtian may ſay, as he ſaid; I had been undone, if I had not been undone. The iſſue is good, although the means ſeem never ſo croſs. This is excellently ſet forth under a type, *Ezek.* 1. 16. *And their appearance and their work, was as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel*, i. e. very croſs, and intangled one in another; one goes one way, and another goes another way; and yet all perform one and the ſame work. Thus is the providence of God, it is often very croſs and complexed, it works by croſs and intangled means; yet carries on one glorious deſign. All theſe croſs ways and means work together (as the Apoſtle ſaith) *for the good of them that love God*, Rom. 8. 28.

2. When

2. When a Chriſtian is moſt in the dark, yet he ſhall not want a ſecret, (though inſenſible) conduct of Gods Holy Spirit, that ſhall ſecure him from ruine in his way; It is a notable relief to a blind man, to have a ſure guide; God is a ſure guide to a good man, when he is unable to direct himſelf. Alaſs, no man is able to guide himſelf, without the aſſiſtance of Gods Holy Spirit; So *Jer.* 10. 23. *O Lord I know that the way of man is not in himſelf, it is not in man that walketh, to direct his ſteps.* Why how then ſhall he eſcape ruine and deſtruction, when ſo many ſnares and rocks are in his way? See that *Pſal.* 37. 23. *The ſteps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.* God goeth along with a good man, and orders him in every ſtep he takes: though we cannot ſee a ſtep of our way, yet if we take God with us, he will direct us: I will guide thee with mine eye; *Pſal.* 32. 8. *His eye is open upon the righteous, and he will guide them in the right way, even then when they cannot ſee their way before them*: and therefore is that counſel of *Solomon*, *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy paths*, *Prov.* 3. 5, 6. As God orders the ſteps of a good man, ſo he orders the ways of a good man; It may be, thou art apt to walk in one way, and God will put thee into another, where thou ſhalt find the greateſt comfort and peace; we never walk ſo ſafely, as when God takes the ſole care of us. When *Abraham* followed God in the darkneſs of ſenſe and reaſon, not knowing whither he went, his courſe was never better ſteered: and oftentimes we do beſt, when we know not what to do; when we are at the greateſt ſtand, our reaſon darkned,

darkned, and our ſpirits perplexed, and all the ways we can imagine of true peace and comfort block'd up, and we know not where to ſet one foot forward, then God comes and takes us by the hand, and leads us into ſuch a way as we dream't not of, where our deſired peace and comfort is prepared for us; There is an excellent promiſe for this purpoſe: *Eſay* 35. 8. *And an high way* ſhall be *there, and a way, and it ſhall be called the way of holineſs, the unclean ſhall not paſs over it, but it ſhall be for thoſe: the way-faring men, though fools ſhall not erre* therein. Obſerve firſt, God makes out a way for good men to walk in, an high way, *Via Regia*, the Kings way, the way of God, an holy way, or the way of holineſs; ſin and wickedneſs is not Gods way. Secondly, *fools ſhall not erre therein, i. e.* the people of God ſometimes are much in the dark, and know not what to do in a particular caſe: I, but yet they ſhall be guided, that they ſhall not looſe their way; but how ſhall they be guided? Why God will be with them; and ſo that paſſage may be read; for he ſhall be with them; In our tranſlation it is rendered, but it ſhall be for thoſe; but it may be read thus, but he, *i. e.* God ſhall be to them, or with them; to conduct and guide them in their way. How many Chriſtians have cauſe to bleſs God and ſay, I could never have found the way to peace and comfort, had not God been my guide? This very experience brought the Prophet to that confidence for the future; As you may ſee in the ſecond verſes before my Text, *Pſa.* 73. 24. *Thou ſhalt guide me with thy counſel, and afterward receive me to glory.*

3. When

3. When a Chriſtian is in the dark, God is ſo far the ſtrength of his heart, that he can wait for light. When they know not what to do, nor what to think, yet they can wait for light; they are expectants; And now Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee, ſaith *David*, *Pſal.* 39. 7. *My ſoul waiteth for the Lord, more then they that watch for the morning*, *Pſal.* 130 7. As a man that hath a long journey to go, upon very great and important buſineſs, how doth he watch for the morning, becauſe the darkneſs of the night ſuſpends his motion; I, but *David* waited more for the Lord, then a traveller watcheth for the morning; or as the words may be read, as they that watch unto the morning; and ſo he makes a compariſon between himſelf and watchmen, *i. e.* There is no watchman doth more obſerve, and wait for the breaking forth of the light of the day, then I do wait for the Lord. And this is a bleſſed relief to the ſoul, to be put into a waiting poſture. When the ſoul knows not what to do, yet it can wait for light; Not like *Saul*, *And, why ſhould I wait for the Lord any longer*; But as *David*, *I waited patiently for the Lord*, *Pſal.* 40. 1. Though a good heart will not let God wait long; No, nor at all (willingly) for obedience, yet he is willing to wait as long as God ſeeth good for light to guide him in his obedience; loath is a gratious heart to miſcarry in his work, or to tread awry, or ſtep out of Gods way, and therefore he will wait for light; glad would he be of one beam of light, to clear up his ſpiritual ſtate to him; I, but he knows that Gods time is the beſt; It is ſad to him to be in the dark, yet he knows

that

that none can ſcatter the cloud, that overſpreads him but God; and therefore he concludes with the Prophet, It is good both to wait, and to hope in the Lord.

4. Though a good man may be in the dark, yet God will not always leave him in the dark; Unto the upright, there ariſeth light in the darkneſs, *Pſal.* 112. 4. Oftentimes when they leaſt expect it, then it ariſeth; as the night is darkeſt a little before the day breaks: ſo when the thickeſt cloud hath overſpread the ſoul, then God cauſeth light to ſpring forth: Even as it was with Saint *Paul* in another caſe, 2 *Corinth.* 1. 8,10. We were preſſed out of meaſure above ſtrength, inſomuch that we deſpaired of life, but we had the ſentence of death in our ſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in our ſelves, but in the living God, who delivered us from ſo great a death. When his condition was at the heighth, when nothing could help or relieve him, but he was at the very point of death, then God revived him; Even ſo it is in this caſe, when the darkneſs of the ſoul is at the heighth, and the ſoul is at the greateſt loſs and plunge, no way open for its comfort and relief, then God gives in ſome beam of Divine light to guide and direct it unto peace and comfort; for though it be the portion of good men, and of children of light ſometimes to walk in darkneſs, yet they are never caſt into utter darkneſs; eternal darkneſs is not their portion, they ſhall not lie down in darkneſs: light is ſown for the righteous, and as God hath his ſeeds time, ſo they ſhall have their harveſt; let the ſoul be never ſo full of fears, and perplexity of ſpirit,

yet

yet this cloud ſhall vaniſh, theſe fears ſhall be ſcattered; and the ſoul ſhall ſee and know, that it is under the gratious diſpenſation of a moſt gratious God, who hath ordered all things for her peace here, and eternal well-fare hereafter. This is clear in our Text; the Prophet had been in darkneſs; I, but God had brought him forth into the light, and now he is able to correct his miſtakes.

5. That experimental light and knowledge, which a ſanctified ſoul gains in the time of its darkneſs, and from the flowing in of Divine Light to ſcatter that darkneſs, affords the ſoul unſpeakable joy and ſatisfaction: that ſhe accounts it a ſufficient recompence for all her trouble and ſorrow in the want thereof. As there is knowledge of things by principles, ſo there is a knowledge, that ariſeth from experience; and it would be very ſtrange, if the ſoul ſhould gain no experimental knowledge by the incomes of Divine Relief in the time darkneſs. S. *Paul* ſaith, *Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience.* Hereby the ſoul knoweth more of God, and attains clearer apprehenſions of him, then it had before, when ſhe is able to ſay, 'Tis true I was in darkneſs, but then God carried on a glorious deſign of doing me good, all though I could not ſee it; I was blind and not able to guide my feet into the way of peace, but I had the conduct of Gods Holy Spirit; I was very much perplexed in my Spirit, but Divine ſtrength kept me up in a waiting frame; Yea, I found at laſt, light breaking in upon me in the darkeſt night; my dark night was turned into a bright ſhining day. Now

this

this experience must needs fill the soul full of ravishing joy and satisfaction; that she may say as *David*, *Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee*; and this is one main end of Gods drawing a cloud over the eye of a Christian, that he may have some experience of Gods gratious dealing with him in this condition, and thereby attain a fuller knowledge of the ways of God, then he did before. I confess it may seem strange, but 'tis true, that a Christian gains light by the darkness of his spirit. Did not the light of a Christian fail him, he would never have such experience of Divine Relief, as now he hath. This makes his light double to what he had before: he had the light of instruction before, but now he hath the light of experience: and hence it is, that those Christians who have had the greatest clouds upon their spirits prove the most knowing Christians; for experience is the mistress of truth; and when the soul is taught by experience, it knows the truth indeed. Now the soul is put out of all doubt; there is no room for queries about it; she is fully satisfied in it. Many times when God goeth about to teach a man by his word, and reads him a Lecture of Divine Promises made to the Soul in such and such a condition, he little minds it: but when God teaches him by his works in fulfilling those promises, then he cannot but sit down and admire at the riches of Gods grace, that God should deal thus with so vile and wretched a creature as he is.

Thus you have seen how Divine Relief flows in to the Soul of a good man, when his understanding fails him.

2. A

2. A ſecond particular caſe is in point of Election. It cannot be denied, that as the appetite of all men is carried out to that which is good, ſo the appetite of a good man is fixed upon the higheſt good, and the ultimate end: But then it muſt be granted, that there is ſometimes a failing of the Will, both in point of Liberty, and alſo in point of Domination.

1. In point of Liberty, which conſiſts chiefly in making choice of ſuch means, as are moſt proper for attaining that end.

2. In point of Dominion, which lies in imploying all inferiour faculties for execution of thoſe means.

Now the failing of the Will in both theſe reſpects is, when the Will falls into a kind of heſitancy, or indifferency, and begins to halt. God hath appointed proper means for the attaining this end; but the Soul may be at a ſtand at ſome time, and not determined. Every good man can't ſay at all times with the Prophet, *My Heart is fixed.* It may be fixed as to the end, but not as to the means: There may be at ſome time a wavering in the Will about it; Chriſtians find it ſo by experience.

2. When the ſtrength of Reſolution is not ſo powerful, as to ſtand out againſt all aſſaults, and to bear down all oppoſition. The Will may be fixt, but not ſo firmly as it ought to be; there may be a giving ground for a time to our ſpiritual adverſary, a ſmall retreat in time of temptation. A Chriſtian never yields to a temptation of Satan, but there is at leaſt a weakneſs in his Reſolution, and ſome preſumption in his Will, againſt which *David* prayed, Pſ. 19.

3. When

3. When the Will grows cold and dead; there is not that vigour or activity, as ought to be put forth in the use of means; his heart fails him, when as he grows like a silly Dove without heart; he prayes, and hears, and confers, but in all with a dead and lazy Spirit.

4. When the Will is fickle and inconstant; 'tis in and out, and keeps not in one tenor and frame, but like a broken Bow, that soon starts aside.

This, this is the spiritual plague and distemper of a good heart. Now let us see the remedy and relief that flows from God, for the cure hereof.

First, God is pleased to cure this sad distemper, by discovering the evil that is in it. The failing of the Will is a greater evil, and is far worse, than the failing of the Understanding. The more there is of Will in the commission of Sin, and the less there is of Will in the performance of Duty, the greater is the Sin. Other wants of the Soul will sooner be passed by in a duty, then the want of Will; and therefore when God sets upon the cure of this distemper, he first opens the wound, and shews the filth that is in it, *i. e.* he convinceth a Christian of the greatness, and heinousness of the sin. It is possible for a Christian that is sound and upright in the main, to have so great a failing in his Will, that for a time he may but jog on in the way of God, that other Christians outstrip him far that set out long after him, and yet he may be very insensible thereof, until God is pleased to strike a dart of spiritual conviction through his very heart; and this wakens and rouzes him up, and makes him bestir himself, and consider where he is, and what he hath been doing all this while.

A

A clear place for this you have, *Cant.* 5. 2. *I ſleep but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved, that knocketh, ſaying, open to me, my ſiſter.* This is the ingenuous confeſſion of the Church, wherein ſhe acknowledgeth that carnal deadneſs and ſecurity, that had overtaken her; I ſleep, or I have been aſleep. Now a Chriſtian never ſleeps ſpiritually, or in a ſpiritual ſenſe, but when his Will flags and fails; when that falls to a kind of indifferency, or is not ſtrongly bent and inclined, but grows cold and dead, which is the ſymptome of a ſleepy man. I, but did Chriſt ſuffer his Spouſe to lie in this ſleepy ſtate? No! See how he awakens and rouzes her up, he calls to her, and bids her open to him; whereby, he let in a beam of divine light, and convinc'd her of her ſin, and this was the firſt ſtep to her cure, this made her open her eyes; as when a man awakes out of ſleep, he firſt opens his eyes, and then he riſes. So 'tis with a ſleepy and dull Chriſtian: God's firſt work upon him is to open his eyes, that he may ſee his ſin, and be affected with it, and this will make him ſtir. O beloved, it may be you do not know the evil that is in a ſleepy eſtate, the ſin that is inindifferency and halting in the waies of God, and in the weakneſs of your Reſolution to walk therein; you take little notice it may be, of the coldneſs and deadneſs of your hearts unto holy duties, or of the fickleneſs and inconſtancy of your Spirits in them; but at one time or other, you muſt expect a Soul-awakening voice, that will make you open your eyes, and then you will ſee how great a ſin it is. What though thou doſt not caſt off the waies of God, yet this heartleſsneſs in them is ſin enough

(if God should charge thee with it) to sink thy Soul as low as Hell.

Secondly, God cures this sleeping evil, by reviving and renewing the inscription and impression of Divine Law upon the heart. A good man never grows dull and dead, but when Divine Law is not in its full strength and power upon the heart. As this is a means of divine life, so it is a restorer and renewer of life. When the heart is exceeding dead, and indispos'd to any thing that is good, this can quicken it; and hence is that of *David*, Psal. 119. 93. *It is a blessed thing for a dead and dull heart to be quickned unto, and in the way of God*: But this will not be, unless the word of God come with life and power upon the heart. And this effect is worth remembring, and a good man will say with *David*, *I will never forget thy Precepts, for with them thou hast quickned me.* It may be thou goest to read or hear the word, with a dead and dull Spirit, and by that God quickens thee: Oh, remember it, and never forget it. It was a great and wonderful mercy to thee, that God did write his Law upon thy heart, when he first brought thee under the bond of his everlasting Covenant; and then bowed and inclined thy heart to a ready and free obedience thereunto. It was a day of power, when he made thee willing to take his yoak upon thee. And it is a great mercy, that he is pleased to revive and renew the characters of this divine and heavenly Law upon thy Spirit, when they seemed to be obliterated and blotted out; when thou hadst almost lost the power and life thereof upon thy Spirit, that there was little stirring or moving in thy Will towards Heaven.

Heaven. God deals with a Christian, as a man deals with his Watch; when it goeth dull, and begins to beat slowly, he gets the Spring, which is the principle of its motion, mended and renewed: So when the heart of man grows dull and heavie, his motions very cold and dead unto any good, God mends and renews the Will, which is the spring and principle of motion in the heart; and for that end, he sets Divine Law and will to work upon it. When God's Will moves upon our Will, then 'tis quick and lively in its motions towards God, not else; if that be dead towards him, the man is dead to any thing that is good. I know the Law, as it is a Covenant of Works, is a killing Instrument; it slew Saint *Paul*, and laid him a bleeding before God: but as it is a Covenant of Grace, so it is a quickning Instrument, and sets the Soul a going after God, in the use of those means which he hath appointed.

3. Sometimes God cures this sad distemper, by shedding his love abroad upon the heart: Divine Love is both a heart-quickner, and a heart-inflamer. *We* (saith the Apostle) *love him, because he loved us first*, 1 Jo. 4. 19. Our love is but the reflex of his. Gods love to us is founded in it self. He loves, because he will love; but our love to God, is founded on his love. Nothing in us moved him to love us; but God's love to us, moves us to love him: and therefore it is, that as God manifests his love to us, so we are able to love him; *The love of Christ constraineth us*, 1 Cor. 5. 17. As when the Sun shineth, then Flowers open; so when the love of God shines upon the Soul,

it opens to God: then the Heart is enlarged for God, the Will is carried out with high resolutions to follow him fully in all the waies of his commands. As the hiding of Gods face is a great damp upon the Spirit, that makes it drive on very heavily in the way of God; so the shining of his face, is a notable quickner of the Spirit: it is like oil to the wheel, that helps on the motion with greater ease. When once a Soul hath tasted the love of God, and got some sense thereof, the pulse of holy desires, will begin to beat strong after the enjoyment of him; it is impossible for a Christian to remain dead, under the warm beams of this most glorious Sun. It is very observable, that no sooner did God call to *Israel* to return, with a gracious promise, *of healing their backsliding, and of pardoning their iniquities*: But they answer, *Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* Though their Hearts were turned even quite away from God, and their Wills exceeding averse from returning; yet that expression of Love and Grace to them, presently turned the bent and frame of their Spirits, and quickned them to a speedy return. *Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God*; as you may see, *Jer.* 3. 22. And therefore it is that a gracious Soul longs for the sense and manifestations of Gods love; not only for the peace and comfort that it brings along with it, but because he knows that it a is quickner of his Heart and Will, to a cheerful performance of obedience unto God. 'Tis that which begets a free Spirit in the Soul; renders it ready and prompt unto all holy service: And now let God call him to what he pleaseth, and he stands

ready

ready preſt to do it. God hath now (as it were) a ſtring upon his heart, he may lead him about whither he will.

4. Sometimes God cures the failing of the Will, by removing thoſe impediments, that ſtopt its motion. You know, if a wheel be ſcotcht, there is no ſtirring of it, until that be removed; even thus 'tis here. Sometimes the Will of man (which is the wheel of Motion) is ſcotcht, ſo that it cannot move forward, until that be removed: Hence that of the Pſalmiſt, *I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou ſhalt enlarge my heart*, Pſal. 119. 32. The word *enlarge*, doth not only ſignifie to widen, and extend a thing; but alſo, to ſet at liberty, and to free it from impediments and incumbrances, and ſo it is uſed, *Pſal.* 4. 1. הרחבת לי *Thou haſt enlarged me, when I was in diſtreſt*; or, *Thou haſt ſet me at liberty.* And as it is applicable to the outward ſtate and condition of a man, ſo the Prophet makes uſe of the ſame word, in reference to the inward ſtate, *I will run the wayes of thy commands.* כי תרחיב. *when thou ſhalt ſet my heart at liberty. i. e.* There is that in my heart, that cloggs me, and hinders me, that I cannot run the way of thy commands, until thou doſt remove it. Sometime the mind is clogg'd with ſtrong temptations. Sometimes with ſore preſſures of grief and horror. Sometimes with impetuous luſts and paſſions. And untill the Soul be ſet free, ſhe cannot move in the waies of God. And therefore divine relief comes into the Soul, in this caſe, to remove thoſe obſtructions, and to take away thoſe clogs. And many a gracious Soul hath cauſe to ſay, Lord thou haſt en-

larged my Heart. My Heart was ſcotcht, but thou haſt ſet me at liberty. I was peſterd with ſuch a temptation, and with ſuch a preſſure of grief and horrour, or with ſuch a paſſion and luſt: but thou haſt removed it, and ſet me at liberty. I know the perfect and full enlargement of the ſoul is not wrought, until ſhe comes in heaven; but God begins the work here: and oftentimes when ſhe is in the greateſt ſtreight, and ſo ſtopt in her motion, that ſhe is like an inſtrument, quite out of tune, and ready to be hung up, or laid by, then God ſteps in, and affords this gratious relief to it.

5. Sometimes when God finds the ſoul in this dead and drowzie caſe, that it hath little mind or ſpirit unto duty, he makes uſe of the rod of correction; and then when the ſoul feels it ſmart, ſhe rouſeth up her ſelf, and ſets to work. Even as when *Abſalon* ſent for *Joab* to come to him once and again, and ſaw he would not ſtir, he commanded his ſervants to ſet *Joabs* field on fire, and then *Joab* makes all the haſt he could to *Abſalon*, 2 *Sam.* 14. 29 30 31. even thus it is here; God ſends for us, firſt one meſſenger comes and then another, to tell us, that God would have us come to him: As you have it, *Cant.* 2. 14. *Let me hear thy voice, let me ſee thy face.* I, but we ſtir not, come not at God, either to pray to him, or praiſe him; that at laſt, God is forced to fire us out, and then we come. You have a notable place for this, *Hoſ.* 5. 15. *I will go, and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and ſeek my face: in their affliction, they will ſeek me early.* They that lay ſnorting in their bed of ſecurity, in the time of pro-

prosperity, will be better husbands in time of adversity; they'l get up early: the word signifies *they shall morning me, i.e.* they shall come in the morning of their time, and seek me. And so *Esay* 26. 16. *They poured out a prayer unto thee, when thy chastning was upon them, and in their affliction they visited thee*; Mark it, when the rod was upon their back, then they cry, and then they beg: I, they poured out a prayer. It was not (as one observes upon the place) a dropping, now and then; but it was violent and continual: the spirit was stirred and now it cannot lie still; Afflictions commonly move and stir the heart one way or other: sometimes they stir the evil and cross humours, that are in the heart of man, and then he rages and fumes against God, and his ways: but where grace is, there they stir up a lazy and a dull spirit to meet God in his way with mournings and supplications. The finger may be in the eye, because grief is in the heart, but this sorrow will have a vent, else the heart will not be at rest: God and the soul must be friends, or she can have no satisfaction. When God corrects the soul in good earnest, then she seeks him in good earnest, and will not be quiet until she finds him. So *Esay* 26. 8, 9. *In the way of thy judgments, O Lord have we waited for thee: the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul, have I desired thee in the night, with my spirit within me, will I seek thee early.* Here is seeking indeed, the whole soul and spirit put forth, and that diligently and constantly, and then with waiting until she find; *We have waited for thee.* 'Tis true affections do not always work thus in the

heart of a good man at firſt. God whips and whips again, before the ſoul ſtirs; I, but God will not give over whipping, until ſhe ſtirs. Dull and heavy ſpirited Chriſtians ſeldom go long without a rod at their backs: and 'tis a great mercy when the rod of correction is any ways efficacious to rouſe them up out of their drouzie and ſleepy ſtate.

3. A third particular caſe of the failing of the natural faculties of the ſoul, is in point of retention; the memory may fail. As a man may have a good head, and a naughty heart: ſo a man may have a good heart and a naughty head; a head that will hold little or nothing, that tends to the ſupport and comfort of his ſoul, when his fleſh fails him. A good Chriſtian may be like a leaking veſſel, that retains no liquor long; he may let ſlip the word of Gods grace, and the external works of Gods grace, and not retain them long with him. I dare not queſtion the truth of that mans grace, that can't remember every truth he reads, or hears delivered; Nor may we ſay, that the work of Gods grace is not wrought in every one, that cannot at all times, call to mind. The great things that God hath done for him; the Apoſtle *Paul* writing to the *Hebrews* tells them, *That they had forgotten the exhortation*, *Heb.* 12. 5. Or *you have forgotten the conſolation*, as ſome render it; For the Greek παράκλησις ſignifies both; becauſe conſolation oft-times flows in by a word of exhortation; and it intimates that they had forgotten, both the word of comfort, and the work of comfort. And thus it is with many a good Chriſtian; he comes to Church

with

with great deſire to learn that which tends to the good of his ſoul, and he is reſolved to treaſure it up in his memory: I, but that is not faithful to him, but preſently looſeth that which he hath committed to its truſt. And it may be, God hath done great things for him, and given him great experience of his fatherly care over him, and tender love to him: I, but he hath loſt much of his experience; that it is to him, as if it had not been. Oftentimes when Chriſtians are under a cloud, they forget that the Sun of Gods favour ever ſhined upon them. And when they are in ſtreights forget the great Salvation that God hath wrought for them, when he called them out of a ſtate of ſin and miſery into a ſtate of grace and happineſs. And this is a great affliction to him, that he can't remember the works of the right hand of the Lord, nor the gracious, and ſoul raviſhing words of his mouth. Now is there no relief to be had from God in this caſe? Yes, and that I ſhall ſhew you in three particulars,

1. Sometimes God brings truths and experiences to our minds and remembrance, when we ſtand in the greateſt need of them. God deals with us as natural parents do with a dear child, whom they love exceedingly: it may be they beſtow a thing upon it, which is very uſeful for it, but for want of care, it looſeth it; the parents finding it, lay it up for the child againſt a time of need, and then bring it forth. Even thus doth God ſometimes; that truth and experience, which we have loſt, he treaſures up againſt a time of need, & then brings it forth, when he knows it will do us the moſt good, Comfort ſhall be given in,

in, when the ſoul hath quite forgotten, that ſhe ever had comfort. And as 'tis the office of the Holy Ghoſt to comfort mourners, ſo in order hereunto, he muſt teach the ſoul, and bring things to our remembrance. So it is promiſed, *John* 14. 26. *But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghoſt, whom the Father will ſend in my name, ſhall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance*; Firſt, He muſt teach the ſoul thoſe things that belong to comfort: I, but the ſoul is very apt to forget what ſhe hath learned; Why if it doth ſo; then he is a remembrancer to bring things forgotten to our remembrance. As 'tis a notable comfort to a Chriſtian, in the time of trouble and ſorrow, to call the promiſes and providences of God to mind; ſo it is part of the Office of the Holy Ghoſt to bring things to our remembrance for our comfort. And ſometimes when things are quite out of our remembrance, and even buried in the grave of forgetfulneſs, the Holy Ghoſt brings them all to our minds as freſh as if we had but newly received them. Saint *Paul* wrote the ſame things to the *Phillippians*, which he had either preach'd to them or wrote to them before, that he might imprint them the better upon their minds: and ſome gather out of *Matth.* 5. compared with *Luke* 6. 20. that our Saviour preached the ſame Sermon twice over; becauſe many hearers are dull to conceive, hard to believe, and apt to forget. And the Holy Ghoſt ſometimes comes and Preaches that again to the ſoul, which it may be ſhe heard ten or twenty years before, but had forgotten it. Perhaps thou art at a great loſs for a promiſe,

and

and for former experiences, and wouldſt give any thing in the world for the comfort that once thou hadſt thereby: and then the Holy Ghoſt gives them in to thee. Dying Chriſtians ſometimes have had experience hereof, when all their comfort hath fled from them, as the brooks paſſed away from the troops of *Tema*.

2. Sometimes when a Chriſtian hath forgotten old experiences, God creates new for his joy, and comfort. When old mercies are worn out of our remembrance, he engraves new mercies upon our minds; and when ſome promiſes of grace, and comfort are ſlipt out of our memory, he points us to others that are as ſuitable to our preſent ſtate. It may be thou haſt forgot the promiſes of this life, and God faſtens the promiſes of eternal life upon thy ſpirit; thou haſt forgot ſomething of that which thou haſt learnt heretofore. And to ſupply the want thereof, he teacheth thee ſomething which thou didſt never learn and ſometimes a word of precept is more needful to be taught, then the word of promiſe; and a Chriſtian finds it ſo. When the heart begins to grow wanton and looſe under gratious promiſes and experiences, it is juſt with God to take them away, and to feed her with harder Diet: yet ſo, that ſhe ſhall have cauſe to bleſs God at laſt for it; for elſe ſhe might have died of a ſurfeit. God doth not always adminiſter that to us, which is moſt toothſome, but that which is moſt wholſome; not always that which is moſt delightful, but that which is moſt needful, as is hinted by our Saviour, *Matt. 6. 8. Your father knoweth what you have need of*, i. e. You may be ſure of that which God knows neceſſary and ſuitable

ſuitable to your preſent ſtate and condition; although he denies you that which you moſt deſire. A father doth not always provide the ſame diet for his children, but gives them ſometimes one thing and ſometimes another: but however, they ſhall have that which is moſt needful for them; and when he denies them that which their appetite longs for, and it can't be had, he gives them that which may be more for their health. Even thus God doth with his children: ſpiritual food they ſhall have; and although they muſt not always feed upon the ſame diſh, yet they ſhall have that which is beſt for them. New mercies are oftentimes given in to them, who have forgotten old. So that a Chriſtian hath a new ſong put into his mouth, to ſing before the Lord, as the Prophet ſaith, *Pſal.* 40. 3. *He hath put a new ſong into my mouth even praiſe unto our God.* I confeſs it is the ſin and weakneſs of Chriſtians to forget old experiences of Gods goodneſs to them; yet ſuch is the indulgence of our heavenly Father, as to ſupply our defects herein by a ſuitable diſpenſation, and to remember us, when we forget him.

3. Sometimes God ſupplies the want of a good memory, by a mighty and efficacious bleſſing of his Holy Spirit; ſo that there is much conveyed into the heart, to better that little that is retained in the head. A good work may be wrought upon the heart, when very few words, that are delivered by the Preacher, are remembred. The word ſometimes paſſes through the ſoul, and leaves a ſweet ſavour behind it, although it ſtayeth not. It may be a poor ſoul goeth to hear a Sermon, and upon

upon his return, would think he had loſt all his pains, were it not for this, that he hath felt the power and efficacy of the Spirit of God upon his heart to do him good; and for this he bleſſeth God. He finds his heart quickned, or melted, or eſtabliſhed in the faith; and this is better to him, than if he had it all by heart, without ſuch gracious effects. 'Tis good to remember what you hear; but 'tis better to be what you hear; when it may be ſaid of you, as our Saviour of his Diſciples, *Now are ye clean through the word which I have ſpoken to you, John* 15. 3. As a ſieve will not hold the water, that is put into it, yet is waſhed and cleanſed by it; even thus it is with ſome hearers, though they can retain nothing of the expreſſion of the word, yet they are cleanſed by the lively and efficacious impreſſion thereof.

Beloved, I ſpeak not this to incourage any one in careleſs hearing and wilful neglect of retaining what they hear: but for the comfort of thoſe, who when they have given all diligence in their attention, yet their memory fails them in retaining what they have heard. And I deſire that all would take notice of this one thing; that though it be the duty of all, to treaſure up the word in their heads, yet the deſire of their ſouls ſhould be chiefly carried out after an impreſſion thereof upon their hearts. Head knowledge is good, but heart knowledge is better. To be able to repeat a Sermon is good, but to live a Sermon is better. And thou mayſt be ſure, that God will inable thee to live truth, in ſome meaſure, although thou art not able to expreſs the words thereof, as they are delivered to thee; And this ſhall be thy Relief in this caſe.

Thus

Thus much shall serve to shew you how Divine Relief flows in to the soul, when the natural faculties thereof fail.

2. Divine Relief flows in from God, to the Soul of a good man, when his infused habits fail; and in the opening of this, I must hold to my propounded method.

1. I shall shew you, that they may fail, and how far they may fail.

2. How relief flows into the Soul in this case. First, The infused habits of Grace and Virtue may fail. There is not a Grace in a Christian, but may fail at one time or other. Though the state of Grace abideth alwaies; yet every mans grace, (if any mans) doth not alwaies abide in the same state. A true frame of Grace, shall never be destroyed, but the heart of a gracious man doth not alwaies continue in the same frame. The stream may not be cut off, and yet there may be ebbings, as well as flowings. It may be low water with a Christian at some time, in point of inherent grace, as well as spiritual comfort. He that hath the most grace, may seem like him, that hath the least; and that in three things. 1. In respect of the strength of Grace. 2. In respect of the vigour and activity of Grace. 3. In respect of the beauty and lustre of Grace.

First in respect of the strength of Grace: Grace is not alwaies in the same strength. *Abraham* was strong in Faith, yet his Faith was not alwaies alike. We find his Fear too strong for his Faith: *Abraham's* Faith had ebbings and declinings. *Job's* Patience at the first, was mighty to bear, and undergo his afflictions; yet at some time it flagg'd.

Se-

Secondly, Grace may fail in point of life and vigour: The ſpiritual life of a Chriſtian, may not be alwaies lively and active. Faith and love may not die, and yet they may ſtir very little; the fire of holy affections not be extinct, and yet not flame. The Church of *Epheſus* had left her firſt Love, but ſhe had not left off to love; ſhe loved Chriſt: I, but not as ſhe did at firſt; So it may be with others; there may be an abatement of their love, although not an extinguiſhment of it.

Thirdly, Grace may fail in reſpect of its beauty and lovelineſs; the beauty thereof may fade much. 'Tis with a Chriſtian, as 'tis with a fruit-bearing tree; the beauty of the tree, is its leaves and fruit: Now when the fruit is pluckt, and the leaves fallen, the beauty is gone. Even ſo the holy fruit of a Chriſtian, is the beauty of a Chriſtian; that which renders him and his grace very lovely in the eyes of good men: but when the fruit is off the tree, when you ſee not the fruit of holineſs and of ſpirituality growig upon him, in his ſeaſon, the beauty of a Chriſtian is departed from him. And thus it may be with a good man for a time. He that formerly acted very humbly, may upon ſome temptation, act very proudly. He that once acted very ſelf-denyingly, may at another time, act very ſelf-ſeekingly. He that formerly walked like a Saint, and truly acted the part of a Saint; may act not only below a Saint, but below a man: Such changes and varieties are found upon the moſt gratious frames of Spirit, which the beſt of Saints have in this world. The ſtrength of grace may ſo far abate, as that the ſtrength of ſin may increaſe. The vigour and life of grace

may

may ſo far abate, as that little or nothing may appear, but the deformity of ſin.

Secondly, What relief flows into the heart of a good man in this caſe? God is ſtill the ſtrength of his heart,

1. By preſerving the root and principle of grace alive, that would die if it were not preſerved by a divine power. Every Chriſtian would ceaſe to be gracious, as well as fail in the exerciſe of grace, if he were wholly left to himſelf: I, but Chriſtians are kept in a ſtate of grace, by the power of God, 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. *Grace in a Chriſtian, is the root of a Chriſtian*; and therefore Believers are ſaid to be rooted and grounded in love, *Eph.* 3. 17. and as the root may live, when the fruit falls off, nay when the trunk of the tree withers and decays, that there is little life in it; ſo it may be with a Chriſtian. I, but how is this Root kept alive? Why, it is kept by an Almighty power. Though a Chriſtian doth not alwaies take care of his graces, that they may be liuely and ſtrong; yet God doth alwaies take care, that the root of grace may live; he will keep that alive. Divine power is like a ſtrong Fort or Garriſon to a Chriſtians Grace, that keeps it ſafe: It may be aſſaulted and beleaguered, but ſhall never receive a mortal wound. It is the great ſecurity of a Chriſtian, that God will not truſt him with the root and principle of grace. That ſhall never be in thine own keeping, he truſts thee with the exerciſe of grace, but not with the principle and root. No, he keeps that himſelf; he is both the Garriſon, and the Commander in it; and you may be ſure that that isimp regnable.

2, God

2. God is the ſtrength of a Chriſtians heart, when the infuſed habits of grace fail, and ſin grows ſtrong and vigorous; by healing and reſtoring him. A Chriſtian never fails in the exerciſe of grace, but ſin gives him a wound. And therefore *David* prayed, *Lord heal my Soul, for I have ſinned*, Pſal. 41. 4. And what *David* prayed for, God promiſeth to his people, *Hoſ.* 14. 4. *I will heal their back-ſlidings.* The weakneſs and decay of grace, brings a Chriſtian preſently to the falling ſickneſs; and ſo it did *David* and *Ephraim*: I, but God will be a Phyſitian to the Soul in this caſe, and will heal their diſeaſes; and ſo he did *Davids* falling-ſickneſs: for which he return'd the tribute of Praiſe, *Pſal.* 103. 3. *My ſoul, praiſe thou the Lord, and all that is within me, praiſe his holy name, who healeth all thy diſeaſes.* *David* had many diſeaſes upon him once; for one diſeaſe is the cauſe of another; I, but God healed all, and raiſed him up again. And herein the grace of God did ſhine forth with great luſtre and glory, that even raviſhed his ſoul in the ſenſe thereof. As it appears wonderful in preſerving ſpiritual life, and the root of grace, ſo it is no leſs to be admired for its healing and reſtoring virtue, that it puts forth upon the Soul, when ſpiritual diſeaſes have ceiſed upon it. You have a notable place for this, *Cant.* 8. 5. *I raiſed thee up under the apple-tree.* They are the words of Chriſt to his Spouſe: She had been feeding her ſelf upon the forbidden fruit of earthly delights, and ſenſual pleaſures, until ſhe could ſtand upon her feet no longer, and there ſhe falls and lies: I, but then Chriſt comes to her ſeaſonably, takes her by the hand and raiſes her up.

Green fruit will cauſe diſtempers in the body natural; and ſenſual delights and pleaſures will cauſe diſeaſes in the body ſpiritual: none can cure them but Chriſt. When thou art fallen under the Apple-tree, he muſt raiſe thee up; nay, Chriſt will do it; though he may ſuffer the poor Soul to fall, yet he will not ſuffer it to lie and periſh. This is one main difference between the falls of a gracious man into ſin, and the fall of a wicked man. God lets a wicked man fall and lie in his ſin. As he falls willingly and reſolvedly, ſo he lies wretchedly, and deſperately in his ſin: But as a godly man falls through a weakneſs of grace, ſo God pities him, and raiſes him up again. *Peter* fell foully, when he denied his Maſter, but he did not fall finally: Chriſt raiſed him up, and reſtored him to his former health and ſoundneſs. So you may ſee, *Matth.* 26. 75. *And Peter remembred the words of Jeſus, and he went out, and wept bitterly.* The way that Chriſt takes to heal the backſlidings of his people, is to break their hearts and melt them into godly ſorrow. When poor Souls have been almoſt drown'd in the waies of ſin, he drowns their ſin in the red ſea of godly ſorrow; the Soul ſwims aloft, but his ſin ſinks to the bottom, that it may riſe no more.

3. God is the ſtrength of a Chriſtians heart, when grace fails, by working a new creation upon the heart. The giving of grace at firſt, is a creation; and hence new Converts, are called new creatures. So the ſtrengthening weak grace, and reviving and renewing of grace, is no leſs a creation; it is the work of an Almighty power upon the Soul. And therefore *David* prayed for it, under

under this notion; *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me*, Pſal. 50.10. God puts forth the ſame power in ſtrengthening the weakneſs of grace, as he doth in giving the firſt act of grace; as grace is not mans creature, but Gods. *We are* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *Gods workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus, unto good works*, Eph. 2. 10. So the renewing and reviving grace, is not mans work, but Gods. When he ſeeth a poor Chriſtian lie languiſhing, that he is ſcarce able to put forth one act of grace he can neither believe, nor love, nor obey, that Satan makes a prey of him, and is ready to carry him away captive, as his priſoner, God creates new ſtrength, and a new life, and a new glory upon the Soul. If a Chriſtian hath his winter, he ſhall have his ſpring alſo; he ſhall not be alwaies without fruit. Moſt full is that promiſe, *Hoſ.* 14. 5, 6. *I will be as the dew unto Iſrael: he ſhall grow as the lilly, and caſt forth his roots as Lebanon: His branches ſhall ſpread, and his beauty ſhall be as the olive tree, and his ſmell as Lebanon.* Obſerve Gods method in working upon decaying Chriſtians. Firſt, he heals their backſlidings, ſo *ver.* 4. *I will heal their backſlidings*: I, but that is not all. For without divine influence the Soul will be as apt to relapſe as ever; and therefore God promiſeth, as a further act of grace, that he will be as the dew unto *Iſrael.* Dew is of a fructifying and refreſhing nature, it calls forth the fruits of the earth, when they lie hid in the roots of trees, and herbs. Even ſo is Divine Influence, it is of a fructifying nature, and calls forth the fruits of grace, when they lie hid in the root thereof. Let but God ſend forth

his power, and Grace will ſend forth new buds and bloſſoms of holineſs, that there ſhall be a new face upon a Chriſtian: He ſhall grow as the Lilliy, caſt forth his roots as Lebanon, his branches ſhall ſpread, and his beauty ſhall be as the Olive, and his ſmell as Lebanon.

4. God is the ſtrength of a Chriſtians heart, by drawing forth much good out of this great evil. It is a ſore evil for a Chriſtian to decay in grace and to fall into ſin: I, but God works good out of this evil.

Four things God works by this, and they are all good for him.

1. Hereby God diſcovers that corruption, that is in the heart. As when the water ebbs and grows low, then the earth appears; then you may ſee what is at the bottom: So when grace ebbs, and grows low, then the corruption of the heart appears; then it is quickly known, what foul dregs are at the bottom. There is many a Chriſtian, that little thinks how full of ſin his heart is, until his grace grows languid and weak; and then he comes to have a ſad experience thereof. Thus it was with *David*; When grace became ſo weak in him, as not to be able to withſtand a temptation, then he ſaw the uncleanneſs of his heart; and therefore cried to God, to waſh him and cleanſe him; and it is as if he had ſaid, Lord, I ſee now, what a filthy and unclean Spirit dwelleth in me: Lord, do thou purge it out, and cleanſe me from it. If any one had gone to *David*, and told him, that at ſuch a time, he ſhould be overcome by ſuch a temptation, and commit two great ſins: he would hardly have believed that his heart

heart had been ſo bad. But afterwards his experience taught him.

2. Hereby God teacheth the Soul, where its ſtrength lieth; and on whom its grace depends. The decay of grace ſhews, that the ſtrength thereof is not in man, nor in grace it ſelf; but like the Vine, it muſt have a ſupporter. Grace, can't live, nor thrive, without conſtant influences: I, but good men are too apt to depend upon their grace; and not to go to him for ſtrength in whom it lies. Now when a Chriſtian feels the decay of his grace, and his own inſufficiency to relieve and ſtrengthen it; this drives him out of himſelf to Chriſt. This is one main difference between the total want of grace, and a ſenſe of decay in grace. The total want of grace drives men from Chriſt; but a ſenſe of the decay of grace, drives men to Chriſt. So it did *David*, his weakneſs brought him upon his knees.

3. The falls of Chriſtians, through the weakneſs of grace, and the power of ſin, are made notable antidotes and preſervatives againſt final Apoſtaſie. For as there is nothing that eſtrangeth the heart from God, as ſpiritual pride and ſelf-confidence; ſo nothing keeps the heart ſo cloſe to God, as a filial fear of offending God. So you may ſee, *Jer.* 32. 40. *And I will make an everlaſting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me.* This is that which hemms in the Soul, that it cannot go aſtray. Now the falls of Chriſtians provoke and draw forth this filial fear into act. The burnt child dreads the fire; and he that hath been ſtung

ſtung with a Serpent, will ſhun his hole; ſo it is here. None ſo fearful of falling into ſin, as they that have fallen. None ſo wary and watchful; none ſo reſolute and ſtout againſt temptations, and occaſions of ſin, as thoſe who have been at a time overcome.

4. Theſe falls and decayes, are like mighty winds to the Oak, that ſettles him faſter, and make him root deeper in Chriſt. As the more the Oak is ſhaken (if it falls not) the faſter and deeper it is rooted in the earth: So when a Chriſtian hath been ſhaken with the winds of temptations and corruptions, the faſter hold he layeth upon Chriſt, and the deeper he is rooted in him. For,

1. His experience of Chriſt's faithfulneſs in keeping him from falling finally and totally, ſtrengthens his faith in Chriſt.

2. His experience of Chriſt's pardoning love, knits and unites his heart cloſe to Chriſt.

Firſt, His experience of Chriſt's faithfulneſs, in keeping him from falling totally and finally, ſtrengthens his faith in Chriſt. As 'tis a notable trial of Chriſt's faithfulneſs, to keep Saints from falling away finally, when they fall fouly: ſo experience of Chriſt's faithfulneſs is a notable ſtrengthener of a Chriſtians faith in Chriſt. *They that know thy name, will put their truſt in thee*, ſaith *David*, Pſal. 9. 10. A friend that keeps cloſe to a man in time of need, may well be truſted. Even ſo 'tis here. Chriſt keeps cloſe to a Chriſtian, even at that time, when he deſerves to be caſt off, and is both a ſhame and a grief to Chriſt. Surely the experience hereof, muſt needs be a great incouragement to a Chriſtian,

ſtian to truſt him for ever. He ſeeth that Chriſts ſtrength never fails, although his own ſtrength fail. He ſeeth that there is grace enough in Chriſt to ſupport him in the weakeſt condition, and to raiſe him up, when he is at the loweſt. Nay further, he finds this ſtrength put forth upon him, according to the word of promiſe; and though he is unbelieving, yet Chriſt abides faithful to him; And therefore he cannot but conclude from hence, that Chriſt will be his ſtrength for ever, and will never fail him.

Secondly, A Chriſtians experience of the fulneſs and continuance of Chriſts pardoning love, knits and unites his ſoul faſter to Chriſt, then ever; this doth endear Chriſt to the ſoul exceedingly; tryed love is an endearing love; and if any thing will draw out the ſouls affections unto Chriſt, and confirm them againſt all future aſſaults, it is the renewing of pardons, upon the renewal of offences. When the ſoul ſhall hear Chriſt ſay as he doth, *Eſay* 43. 24, 25. *Thou haſt brought me no ſweet cane with money, neither haſt thou filled me with the fat of thy ſacrifices, but thou haſt made me to ſerve with thy ſins; thou haſt wearied me with thine iniquities. I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſion for mine own ſake and will remember thy ſins no more*; I ſay when the ſoul ſhall hear this, it muſt needs be deeply affected herewith. What! Will the Lord be gratious to ſuch a vile wretch as I am? Will he pardon a backſlider? Will he forgive the ſin of one that hath made him to ſerve with his ſin, and wearied him with iniquities? O here is wonderful love; this is tranſcendent love! and ſhall not I

love him, that hath loved me thus? Yet Lord, thou knoweſt, that I love thee; 'tis true, I have backſlidden, and grievouſly offended; but I will do ſo no more. Thus God ſometimes, doth the ſoul much good by that which in it ſelf doth him the greateſt hurt: as, pain eaſeth a Chriſtian, death revives him, diſſolution unites him, ſo corruption clarifies him; and this is a moſt gratious relief.

But before I leave this particular I muſt enter four cautions.

1. That no man take up the better opinion of ſin hereby; for as darkneſs is nevertheleſs an evil, though God bring light out of darkneſs; ſo ſin is nevertheleſs an evil, though God is pleaſed to bring good out of it. Poiſon is deſtructive, although a Phyſician can ſo correct it, as to make it medicinal, and ſo is ſin; and the better opinion thou haſt of ſin, the more evil and mortal it will be to thee.

2. Take heed of lying in ſin, with hopes of a relief from God: watch againſt it, pray againſt it, that thou mayeſt not be overcome of it: but however if thou art overcome by a temptation, if Satan hath tript up thy heels, get upon thy feet again, aſſoon as poſſibly thou canſt; if thou falleſt with *Peter*, weep with *Peter*, and labour to find as much bitterneſs in ſin, as thou haſt found of a ſeeming pleaſure in it. Remember this, that more have fallen into ſin with hopes of riſing again, then have riſen after they have fallen. Many ſin with *Peter*, but few repent with him.

3. Labour to prevent decays in grace: It is eaſier

eaſier to keep health, then to recover it; And it is eaſier to maintain grace in ſtrength and vigour, then to recover any degree of grace, when 'tis loſt. Though it be Gods goodneſs to reſtore grace, yet it is your duty to prevent the loſs thereof.

4. Watch the firſt decay of grace, leaſt it grow to a total conſumption of all; obſerve the leaſt flagging of faith and love, when it comes to a trial; a little grace may ſerve to repair a little decay: but thou wilt ſtand in need of much to repair a great decay; and therefore as ſoon as grace begins to fail, do thou begin to repair. O, ply the throne of grace for ſtrengthening influences, leaſt thy weakneſs prove dangerous and deſperate: however, do not abuſe relieving grace by a preſent ſecurity.

3. The third particular failing of the heart is the failing of Animal ſpirits, that the man is ready to fall into a ſwoon, or the ſoul juſt taking its flight from the body, and leaving its old habitation. So the Church complains, *Cant.* 5. 6. *My ſoul failed*; *Arias Montanus* renders it, *My ſoul went forth*; And this made *David* cry out; *Hear me ſpeedily, O Lord, my ſpirit faileth; I am like them that go down into the pit. David* was a man ful of ſpirit, and yet he was at this time, as if he had had no ſpirit; As 'tis ſaid of *Nabal, his heart died within him, and became as a ſtone*, 1 *Sam.* 25. 87. And thus it may be with a good man at ſome time, and that in theſe caſes,

1. When hope is deferr'd and expectation diſappointed; *Hope deferr'd* (ſaith *Solomon*) *makes the heart ſick*, *Prov.* 13. 12. *i. e.* When the thing hoped

hoped for is deferr'd: a mans heart is ſet upon a thing, and he hopes for the obtaining it, and he waits, and waits, and yet it comes not, this makes the heart ſick; but if his expectation be diſappointed, then his ſpirit dies. It often falls out, that mans time, and Gods time are not the ſame; Man ſets a time to himſelf, and thinks thus; at ſuch a time ſuch a mercy and ſuch a good will come in: I, but Gods time may be long after. Now when he ſeeth that ſtill he muſt wait, and yet the mercy comes not, his heart fails, his ſpirit ſinks.

2. When God hides his face from the ſoul, and ſhe can't ſee it; This was *Davids* caſe, *Pſal.* 143. 7. *My ſpirit faileth, hide not thy face from me, leaſt I be like unto them that go down into the pit, i. e.* The hiding of thy face will quite kill my ſpirits. As the light of Gods countenance is the life of the ſoul; ſo the hiding of Gods countenance is its death: No ſooner doth God depart from a good man, but his ſoul is ready to depart; So it was with the Church, *Cant.* 5. 6. *I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himſelf, and was gone: my ſoul failed, when he ſpake. I ſought him, but I could not find him: I called him, but he gave me no anſwer.*

3. When the ſoul is wounded with the ſenſe of ſin, and of Gods diſpleaſure for ſin; the burden and pain is intolerable, and then the ſpirit ſinks. As nothing ſinks the ſpirit ſo much as ſorrow and grief: So no grief is ſo heavy upon the ſoul as grief for ſin, and the ſenſe of Gods wrath. You have a notable paſſage for this, *Job* 6. 4. *For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poiſon whereof*

drink

drink up my ſpirits. An arrow is a deadly Engine, ſo called in *Hebrew*, from its effect, cutting or wounding; and God ſometimes ſhoots an arrow which pierceth into the ſoul, cuts and wounds it, yea, ſometimes he ſhoots a poiſoned dart, and that drinks up the ſpirit, *i. e.* it kills the ſpirit. Even as a great fire drinks up a little water, that is thrown upon it; So Gods wrath drinks up the ſpirit; it leaves no ſpirit in the heart of a man.

4. A ſudden paſſion of fear makes the heart to fail. So *Luke* 21. 26. Mens hearts failing them for fear; Fear when it is exceſſive, diſpirits a man. *When* Joſephs *brethren found their money in their ſacks*, it is ſaid, *their hearts failed them*; and why? *for they were afraid*, Gen. 42. 28.

5. Some ſtrong temptation of Satan may make the heart to fail, eſpecially if grace be weak. Satans aſſaults ſometimes are very violent; they come upon the heart with great power, like a mighty torrent, that overwhelms and ſinks the ſpirit. Thus *Luther* was aſſaulted by him; His temptation was ſo ſtrong, that it ſeemed to him, as if the ſwelling ſurges of the Sea did ſound aloud at his left ear, and that ſo violently, that die he muſt, except they preſently grew calm: afterwards when the noiſe came within his head, he fell down as one dead, and was ſo cold in each part, that he had remaining neither heat, nor blood, nor ſenſe, nor voice; and thus it hath been with others. The temptations of Satan are ſometimes ſo ſtrong, and violent upon the ſoul, as to cauſe the Animal Spirits to fail.

Theſe

Theſe are the particular caſes wherein God reveals and makes known the greatneſs of his ſtrength for the relief of his people.

1. When a mans heart fails him through a diſappointment; then there is a relief for him,

1. By exchanging a mercy; the ſoul hopes for one, and God gives in a better and more deſireable. God deals not with his people, as *Laban* dealt with *Jacob*; inſtead of a fair and beautiful *Rachel*, he put him off with a blear eyed *Leah*. No! God doth the contrary, it may be thou art ſet upon a blear-eyed *Leah*, and God gives thee a fair *Rachel*; My meaning is, when the heart of a Chriſtian is ſet upon, and ſtrongly carried out after a low and inferiour mercy, and the ſoul is ſick for want of it even ready to die, God gives him an higher, and more glorious mercy. As God is often better to us then our deſires, ſo he is better to us then our hopes, and when he diſappoints our hopes, he gives us a mercy that is beyond our hopes; For God is no way tyed to the hopes of his people; but onely to his word of promiſe; and that he will perform in his own way and time. Now ſometimes the hope of a Chriſtian may be falſely bottom'd, and not rightly fixt on Gods word; and then it is no wonder if we meet with a diſappointment; I, but though God doth fruſtrate our expectation, he will not break his word. The promiſe of God doth not fail; although we are apt to think it doth, when our hope and expectation is diſappointed. The word of the Lord ſtandeth ſure; even then when we are not ſure, that the thing we deſire and

hope

hope for ſhall be granted to us: and hence it comes, that inſtead of the mercy we deſire, God gives us in that, which he hath promiſed, although not deſired nor hoped for.

2. God relieves the hearts of his people by giving in the deſired mercy, when they are paſt all hope of it. When the ſoul is at the very brink of deſpair, then the mercy is given in to revive it; and that is implied in thoſe words of *Solomon*, *Prov.* 13. 12. *Hope deferred maketh the heart ſick, but when the deſire cometh it is a tree of life, i. e.* God may defer the mercy ſo long as to make the heart ſick, even unto death, and then beſtow it upon the ſoul: now when it cometh it is a tree of life; an alluſion to that tree, that God planted in Paradiſe, *Gen.* 2. 9. A tree that was a ſymbole or ſign of life; as the Sacraments are of grace. Now as the faith, hope, and comfort of a true Chriſtian is fed, nouriſhed, and revived by theſe external ſymbols & ſigns: ſo it is revived by the income of a deſired mercy. When the ſoul hath been languiſhing at the door of hope, until it grows out of hope, and is ready to periſh, then God throws in the mercy to revive and comfort it. Nay further.

3. God ſometimes gives in the mercy, in a way that is beyond all hope; in a way that ſeems the moſt croſs to the hopes of a Chriſtian. Sometimes God ſhuts up all the doors of hope; and makes that to be the way of conveying mercy to us. So God promiſed to his people of old, *Hoſ.* 2. 15. *The valley of Achor for a door of hope*, i. e. when they ſhould be deſtitute of thoſe means, as might encourage them to hope, and meet with the great-

eſt

eſt difficulties and troubles, that they could meet with, then the deſired mercy ſhould be given. Great croſſes oftentimes make way for, and uſher in great mercies. Now when mercy comes in unexpectedly, and in a croſs way, it comes with the greater force and power upon the Soul, to revive and comfort it. Mercies that are common to the Soul, do not make ſuch a ſtrong impreſſion upon it, as thoſe that are either more ſpecial, or come to the Soul in a ſingular and unexpected way. Such mercies are very ſweet and precious to the Soul.

2. As there is relief for a good man in this caſe, ſo when the heart fails, through the hiding of Gods face. And that I ſhall ſhew you briefly in three things,

1. When a good man cannot ſee Gods face, God ſpeaks to him, and gives him ſtrength to ſeek his face. When the Soul can't hear God, yet ſometimes ſhe hears the voice of God. So it was with *David*, Pſal. 27: 8, 6. *When thou ſaidſt, Seek my face; my heart ſaid unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I ſeek. Hide not thy face from me, put not thy ſervant away in anger.* God hid his face from *David*, I, but he did not ſhut up his lips; *David* had the happineſs to hear his voice, though it was but from behind a curtain: And this encouraged, and drew forth his Soul to ſeek Gods face. So when Chriſt withdrew himſelf from his Spouſe, that ſhe knew not what was become of him, ſhe ſought him, but could not find him; I, but ſhe heard his voice, *Cant.* 5. 6. And it is a great comfort to a good man, to hear the voice of God, when he cannot ſee the face of God. Sometimes God

ſpeaks

ſpeaks to the Soul by his word, and ſometimes by his works; and thereby draws it forth to ſeek his face. This is a notable ſign, that God is not wholly and eternally departed from us. When God leaves a wicked man, he doth not ſo much as ſpeak to him, he ſhall not hear from God, unleſs it be by way of denouncing judgement againſt him. But when he withdraws, and hides his face from a good man, he ſhall hear the voice of God, though he cannot ſee his well pleaſed face. God is deſirous to ſee their face, although he hides his own; and therefore calls to them, to come and ſeek his face. *Thou ſaidſt, Seek my face*, and this voice of God, cauſed an eccho in *David's* Soul; *And I ſaid, Thy face, Lord, will I ſeek.* And this is one end of God in hiding his face from the Soul, that hereby he may draw forth the deſires of it after him. As a mother ſometimes turns her back upon the child, to ſee whether it will cry after her: Even thus doth God; and it is wonderful delightful to him, to hear a Soul cry after him, when he hath withdrawn himſelf and his face from it.

2. Sometimes, when a good man can't ſee the well-pleaſed face of God, he feels the hand of God, not the weight thereof to cruſh him down, but the power and ſtrength thereof to ſuſtain, and uphold him. That which the Church had experience of in another caſe, when ſhe was ſick of love, *Cant.* 2.6. ſhe did promiſe to her ſelf in this caſe, *Cant.* 8.3. *His left hand ſhould be under her head, and his right hand ſhould embrace her.* Chriſt puts forth both hands; one for the head, and another for the heart; to keep the ſoul from death in this caſe.

1. The

1. The left hand of Christ is put under the head, to keep up and maintain a good opinion of him. When the soul is full of inward trouble it is full of thoughts; So *Psal.* 94. 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me.* Nay it is apt to have hard thoughts of God; such as are unbecoming the dear children of so gratious a father; We are apt to think, that when God hides his face from us, he hath forgotten to be gratious, and in anger shut up his tender mercies from us; that his mercy is clean for ever, and that his promise fails for evermore; that the Lord hath cast us off for ever, and will be favourable no more. To these and the like thoughts is a troubled soul very prone, when God withdraws; Now Christ to prevent these, or to moderate them, puts his hand under our head. As the putting of ones hand under the head of a sick person is a great stay to it, and affords it some ease, that he may compose to rest; so doth Christ deal with a soul, that is sick and ready to die, in the sense of Gods hiding his face from it. He puts under his hand to keep the judgement right, that it may maintain a good opinion of God, and keep up good thoughts of him, and this is a great ease to a good man; for there is nothing afflicts the soul more, then such hard thoughts of God; they are a great torture and perplexity to the soul, and when they are removed, the mind finds great refreshment thereby.

2. The right hand of Christ is put forth to embrace the soul; As his left hand is under the head, so his right hand doth embrace a good man; and with this he stays the heart and keeps it from dy-

ing.

ing: when the ſoul is going forth he ſtays it and keeps it in. So ſaith *David*, *Pſal.* 18. 18. *But the Lord was my ſtay.* The right hand of Divine Grace and ſtrength doth compaſs the ſoul about, and thereby keeps it from going forth: and that is promiſed, *Pſal.* 32. 10. *Mercy ſhall compaſs him about.* The mercy of God is a long arm, and this doth incircle the ſoul and compaſs it about; the ſoul can ſtir no way but mercy meets it, to ſtay its flight. Sometime God ſends a friend to him, who out of his own experience drops a ſeaſonable word of comfort upon his ſoul, and that is a mercy. *Job* 33. 23. Sometime God applies a word of Grace that enlivens his dead heart, and that is a mercy. *Pſal.* 119. 50. Sometimes God brings to mind ſome former intimations of his love, and grace to him, *Pſal.* 42. 6. And ſometime and very often he ſtays the ſoul with this very thought; that it is a great mercy of God to him, that yet he is on this ſide hell, and though he can't ſee the face of God, yet he is not put ſo far off, but he may have the happineſs to ſee it at the laſt. 'Tis mercy, that he is not eternally baniſhed from his preſence; And this ſtays the heart. *Lam.* 3. 22.

3. Though God hides his face for a time, yet he doth at one time or other unvail and diſcover it to the ſoul, for its unſpeakable joy and comfort. If not in this life, yet in the life to come, a true Chriſtian ſhall ſee the face of God again, although it be hid for a time. You have an excellent promiſe for this, *Eſay* 54. 7, 8. *For a ſmall moment have I forſaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee: in a little wrath I hid my face from*

thee, for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy redeemer. Gods departure from a good man is not an eternal departure; His hiding his face, is not for ever: Though thou canst not see it now, yet thou shalt see it; Thou mayst say with *David, Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance*, Psal. 42. 5.

3. In case that the Animal Spirits do fail a man, through the sense of sin and Gods displeasure for it, there is relief to be had from God: when the poisoned arrows of Divine wrath stick fast in the soul, and drinks up the Spirits, there is relief for it; And this I shall also make evident to you in three things.

There are three remedies that God makes use of to cure the wounds that sin and Gods wrath make in the Soul. 1. The blood of Sprinkling. 2. The precious Balm of Gospel promises. 3. The sweet oyl of the Holy Spirit.

1. The blood of sprinkling, or the blood of Christ sprinkled upon the heart: this washeth and cleanseth the wound; So 1 *John* 1. 7. *And the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin*; And so *Revel.* 5. *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood:* For as a wound in the body natural will not heal, unless the blood and corruption be washed out, no more will the wounds of the soul ever be cured, unless they be first washed with the blood of Christ. And therefore this is Gods first work to apply the blood of Christ to the wound; and it is very effectual for this

this purpoſe; as you may ſee, *Heb.* 9. 13, 14. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the aſhes of an heifer, ſprinkling the unclean, ſanctifieth to the purifying of the fleſh: How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt purge your conſcience?* It firſt ſtancheth the blood, and then purifies the wound, and makes it fit for a plaiſter; The meaning hereof is this, that the knowledge of our juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is a ſingular and choice remedy, for the taking away the ſenſe of ſin and Gods diſpleaſure for it; It is not only requiſite that Chriſt ſhed his blood for us, and that God hath accepted it as a full ſatisfaction to His Divine Juſtice which was offended by our ſin, but this muſt be applyed to us. As under the Law, it was not enough, to have the blood of bulls and of goats, but it muſt be ſprinkled, or elſe there was no cleanſing; even ſo, unleſs God applies the blood of Chriſt to thy conſcience, and give thee the knowledge thereof, that it is ſhed for thee in particular, thy Spiritual wounds that ſin and Satan hath made in thee, will never be cleanſed; Thou mayeſt be juſtified before God, but ſtill thine own heart may accuſe and condemn thee; Though God doth not charge thy ſin upon thee, yet thou wilt be continually charging it upon thy ſelf; and the burden will be intolerable; thy wounds will ſtill bleed; every remembrance of ſin, will draw new blood from thy heart; It is true the bleſſing lies in Gods free remiſſion of our ſin; but the comfort lies in our knowledge thereof. A traitour may be pardoned, and that may ſave his life, but if he knows it not, he looſeth the comfort thereof. Even thus it is, until we know that God hath

freely juſtified us in the blood of Chriſt, the ſenſe of ſin, and Divine wrath will be heavy upon the ſpirit of an awakened ſinner, and therefore God's ſprinkling the blood of Chriſt upon the conſcience muſt needs be a ſweet relief.

2. Another remedy which God makes uſe of for the curing of this ſpiritual wound, is the balm of Goſpel promiſes: there are two ſorts of promiſes, by which God ſpeaks comfort to a diſconſolate ſoul. 1. Inviting promiſes. 2. Aſſuring and ſealing promiſes.

1. Inviting promiſes and by theſe he encourages a poor diſtreſſed ſinner to come to him; Such is that, *Matth.* 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden*; And that *Eſay* 55. 1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters: he that hath no money; come ye buy and eat, yea come buy wine and milk without money and without price*; And that *Rev.* 22. 17. *And the Spirit and the Bride ſay, come, and let him that heareth, ſay, come, and let him that is a thirſt come; and whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* Now when a ſoul that heareth theſe promiſes, conſiders with it ſelf thus; Sure I am, that I am weary and heavy laden with the burden of ſin; ſin is an heavy load upon my ſoul; the arrows of Gods indignation have ſet my ſoul on fire, that I ſtand in need of theſe cooling and refreſhing waters; I am a poor ceature; I have no money; nothing to give for the incomes of Gods grace and love; I am a meer beggar; and therefore muſt needs be one that God invites. And thus God draws the ſoul to him, that he may apply,

2. The

2. The assuring and sealing promises of comfort: Such as these, *Heb.* 10. 16, 17. *This is the Covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more*; And that in *Esay* 57. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. *For thus saith the high and lofty one, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy. I will dwell in the high, and holy place: with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend for ever neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls that I have made. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth and smote him: I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart; I have seen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him, and restore comfort unto him. I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord, and I will heal him.* Now as these promises are the matter of comfort, so they are the means of comfort; For when God applies them to a wounded soul, there passeth a vertue and power through them to heal and cure it.

3. To this he adds the oyl of his Holy Spirit, and that he drops into the wound; and this doth not only heal, but takes away the very scar of the wound, and renders the skin as fresh and beautiful as before; Oyl in Scripture sets out joy and chearfulness, and therefore it is called the oyl of joy; And *Esay* 61. 3. *To appoint unto them, that mourn in Sion, to give unto them beauty for*

ashes, and the oyl of joy for mourning; This cures the mournful sad and perplexed spirit, and makes the face to shine again with brightness and glory; according to that, *Psal.* 104. 15. *And oyl to make the face to shine.* I do not say, that God always raiseth the comfort of the soul thus high, but sometimes he doth, not only heal, but anoint and make the soul fair and lovely in his eye; For there is no such light in Gods eye, as a sanctified heart that is chearful and joyful before him; such a soul is the joy and delight of his heart; and especially where he hath made the deepest wound, and filled the soul with the greatest horrour in the sense of his wrath and displeasure, there when he comes to give peace and comfort, he anoints the most; the greater wound the greater measure of comfort; and hence it is, that many a soul blesseth God for its wounds, because else it would never have attained to such joys and comforts as God gives in. Thus I have shewn you what relief flows into the soul in this case.

4. In case that the Animal Spirits fail through a sudden passion of fear; There is relief for it, And that four ways.

1. Sometimes God preventeth the thing feared, and never suffers it to come to pass.

2. Sometimes God delivers the soul from its fears.

3. Sometimes the thing feared is so ordered and disposed by the Lord, that it is less then our fear, not worth our fear.

4. Some-

4. Sometimes God turns the fears of his servants into the right channel, that instead of fearing evil, they fear him more then ever they did.

First, Sometime God prevents the thing feared, and never suffers it to come to pass; or at least not at that time we are afraid it will: 'tis true *Job* could say, *the thing which I feared is come upon me, Job* 3. 25. *I was not in safety, neither had I rest, nor was I quiet, yet trouble came.* I, but many a good man hath cause to say, the thing which I greatly feared is not come upon me; Though God did not deliver me from my distrustful fear, yet he delivered me from that which I did fear. As sometimes we groundlesly expect and hope for a thing that never comes: so sometimes we groundlesly fear an evil that never comes. As God denyes the desires of a groundless confidence in great mercy, so he prevents our groundless fears in mercy; For as wicked men are apt to fear evil less then they should, so the godly are apt to fear evil more then they should. But as that which wicked men fear not, comes suddenly upon them, so sometimes that which a godly man fears, comes not at all; This made *David* say, *Psa.* 34. 4. *I sought the Lord and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears, i. e.* He delivered me from the evils which I feared; The effect is here put for the cause.

Secondly, Sometimes the Lord delivers a good man from the fear of evil. I mean, from a distrustful, distracting, and tormenting fear, which dispirits him, and sinks his spirits; As some fear, where no fear is, so sometimes God animates, and lifts up the soul above fear, where fear is; True faith will strive with tormenting fears,

and when 'tis made ſtrong, will caſt them out. There is an excellent promiſe for this, *Job.* 11. 14. 15. *If iniquity be in thine hand put it far away, and let not wickedneſs dwell in thy tabernacle. For then thou ſhalt lift up thy face without ſpot, yea thou ſhalt be ſtedfaſt, and ſhalt not fear.* Noting out, that when faith is ſo ſtrong as to purifie the heart and life from ſin, then it ſets the Soul free from the fear of thoſe evils, that come by ſin. Now this is a great relief to the Soul. For to be freed from the fear of evil, is better then to be freed from the evil. The promiſe runs not thus, Thou ſhalt be freed from evil, but thou ſhalt be freed from the fear of evil. Happineſs conſiſts more in removing inward, then outward trouble. He that is afraid of evil, before it comes, may be happy though it comes.

Thirdly, The thing feared, is ſo ordered and diſpoſed by the Lord; that it is a leſſer evil, then we feared, and is not worth our fear. Many are far more afraid then hurt; or more hurt by their fears, then by the evils they feared. We are indeed very apt to greater evils, and leſſer mercies; and that is the reaſon, that we meet with evils with ſo much fear, and mercies with ſo little faith. The thoughts of one evil torments our Spirits more, then the thoughts of many mercies cheers and comforts our Spirits. I, but Gods thoughts are above our thoughts; and when we are afraid, that the evil impending will be very great, it proves very little. 'Tis with many Chriſtians, as with ſome inexperienced Patients; they dread the taking of any Phyſick, leſt it ſhould overpower nature; but

but when they come to take it, they find it works not half so much, as they feared it would. A wise Physitian tempers the potion, according to the constitution of the body, and the nature of the distemper, and not according to the fears of the Patient. Even thus doth God oftentimes deal with us; he orders and corrects all our evils, so that they prove less hurtful, and more beneficial to us, then we could think; not one dram too much, or too little. He proportions not our purging Physick according to our fancies, but to our necessity; when a little will serve the turn, he will not exceed.

Fourthly, Sometimes God turns the fears of his servants into the right channel; that in stead of fearing evil, they fear him more then before they did; and the fear of God is a notable means to cure the fear of evils. (As one saith well) He fears nothing else, who fears that one thing, to sin; and he fears none else, who fears that one, who is more then all, God. The fear of God is an excellent antidote against the power and poyson of all other fears. You have a full place for this, *Es.* 8. 13, 14. *Fear not their fear, nor be afraid; sanctifie the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.* He that would not fear that which the wicked sometimes do, and ought to fear, must fear him only whom they do not fear. And this is Gods great work, to put his fear into the hearts of his people, and that will cast out all distrustful and distracting fears.

Thus I have dispatcht the fourth case.

Fifthly and lastly, In case that the Animal Spirits fail through some strong temptation of Satan; there

there is relief for it. As Satan ſets all his power and policy on work againſt the Soul: So God ſets all his power and wiſdom on work, to relieve and help it. And when Satan doth his worſt to deſtroy it, God doth his beſt to ſave it. Relieving power comes in according to invading power: when All might is againſt him, then all might is for him. Three things God doth for an aſſaulted Chriſtian. 1. He calls Satan off. 2. He calls the tempted Soul in, and adminiſters heart-cheering Cordials. 3. He crowns the victory.

Firſt he calls Satan off. When God ſeeth this roaring Lyon, preying upon the Vitals of a Chriſtian, and ready to deſtroy him, God calls him off. For God hath Satan upon a ſtring, and he can go no further, then he permits him. When Satan would have touch'd the life of *Job* (as he had a great mind to it) then God bade him hold; that was precious, and not a fit morſel for the tooth of ſuch a beaſt. Satan never engageth, nor encounters with a Chriſtian, but with Gods leave. He can't ſhoot a fiery dart at the Soul, until God is pleas'd to looſen his Chain, whereby he hath him at command. And no ſooner is he in any hopes of a victory over him, but God ſounds a retreat. He muſt and ſhall fall off: for God will not ſuffer him to kill, though he wounds. The Spirits may fail, and the Heart may ake, when Satan thruſts ſore at him; I, but Satan ſhall not give him a deadly wound. If God doth but appear on the behalf of a poor aſſaulted Chriſtian (as he doth in the very nick of time, when there is but an hairs breadth between him and death,) Satan cannot ſtand his ground, but gives back, and the

Soul

Soul enjoyes a ſweet releaſe. It is in this caſe, as it was with thoſe, that were poſſeſſed with the Devil. Chriſt did but give the word of command, and Satan preſently obeyed it. As you may ſee, *Mark* 1. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. *And there was in their Synagogue a man that had an unclean ſpirit, and he cryed out, ſaying, Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jeſus of Nazareth? art thou come to deſtroy us? I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God. And Jeſus rebuked him, ſaying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean ſpirit had torn him, and cryed with a loud voice, he came out of him. And they were all amazed, inſomuch that they queſtioned within themſelves, ſaying, what thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean ſpirits, and they obey him.* The words hold out the authority of Chriſt, put forth upon Satan in a time when there was the greateſt need thereof. When the poor creature was ready to be devoured by him, Chriſt gave but the word, bade him come out, and he was not able to keep poſſeſſion any longer. Even ſo, when the Soul is aſſaulted by him; if God ſteps but in, and layes his commands upon him, if God doth but ſay it is enough, let him alone; he is preſently bound hand and foot, he cannot ſtir any further. Satan never had, nor ever ſhall have his will upon one true Believer.

Secondly, God calls the poor tempted Soul in, and adminiſters heart-cheering cordials to it. A poor Soul never ſtands in more need of a Cordial, then when it hath been worried by this arch enemy of its comfort; and God ſtands as ready to adminiſter it. No ſooner had Chriſt got rid of him,

him, when he had worſted him in open field, but God diſpatcht away ſome of his glorious attendants, with the beſt Cordials that Heaven conld afford. So you may ſee, *Mat.* 4. 11. Then the Devil leaveth him, and Angels came and miniſtred unto him. Surely it muſt needs be ſome rare dainty, that is ſent by the hand of an Angel: what it was is not expreſſed; a Chriſtans experience doth beſt diſcover it: for as Chriſt was in all things tempted as believers are, ſo one main end of his temptations was, that he might be able to ſuccour thoſe that are tempted, *Heb.* 1. *ult. For in that he himſelf ſuffered being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted.* He is ſenſible of that relief that he had from his Father, both in the temptations, and after. And as he will have Chriſtians conformable to him in temptations, ſo they ſhall be in relief and comforts; He knows what it was to be tempted, and what it was to be adminiſtred unto after the temptation was over, when he came ſweating out of the field, faint, and weary; and he hath learnt to ſuccour and relieve his people in the like condition, and therefore he ſends to them, and ſends for them to come to him, that he may adminiſter to them. He firſt ſends down the holy Spirit into their hearts, to give them notice, that this is a fit ſeaſon for them to come to Court, and apply themſelves to him at the throne of Grace, that they may have grace and mercy, in this time of need: & when they come and make their addreſſes to him, he then applies himſelf to them, & adminiſters to them according to their need. No ſooner was *Luther* releaſed from a grand aſſault of Satan, and come

to

to himſelf; but preſently he betook himſelf to Chriſt in prayer, and prayed moſt earneſtly, and received great comfort thereupon, and made confeſſion of his Faith. This made him ſay, that Meditation, Prayer, and Temptation makes a Divine. I am ſure it makes an experimental Chriſtian.

Thirdly, God crowns the victory. Though a Chriſtian may be tempted, yet he ſhall overcome, *In all theſe* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *we are more then conquerours*, Ro. 8.37. What is that? Triumphers, 2 *Cor.* 2. 14. *Now thanks be to God which alwayes cauſeth us to triumph in Chriſt.* As ſure as Satan leads a poor Chriſtian into the field, and there encounters him with his helliſh temptations; God will bring him out with an holy triumph. Hence is that of *Pſal.* 5. 11, 12. *But let all theſe that put their truſt in thee, rejoice: let them ever ſhout for joy, becauſe thou defendeſt them: let them alſo that love thy name, be joyful in thee. For thou, Lord, wilt bleſs the righteous; with favour wilt thou compaſs him as with a ſhield.* The Hebrew word ſignifies, *thou wilt crown him with a ſhield.* Some think that the Prophet alludes to a cuſtome of the *Athenians*; who were wont, if a Soldier brought his Shield with him out of the battel ſafe and whole, although he loſt his Sword, to lay his Shield upon his head, and with that, as with a Diadem to crown him. He that holds faſt the ſhield of Faith in an hour of temptation, ſhall wear it on his head as his crown. The trial of a Chriſtians faith, *which is much more precious then of gold that periſheth, though it be tried with fire, ſhall be found unto praiſe, honour and glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Pet. 1. 7. And hence is that

of

of the Apoſtle, *I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith, and from henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs.* 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.

Thus I have opened the Doctrine, and ſhewed you what relief flows from God to his people, both when their fleſh fails, and when their heart fails. 1. When the natural faculties of the Soul fail. 2. When the infuſed habits of the Soul fail, and 3. When the animal Spirits fail.

Now I will give you the grounds and Reaſons thereof.

Reaſ. 1. Taken from that near relation that is between God and good men. He is their Father, and they his Children, he is their Husband, and they his Wife. Now this double relation ſpeaks forth that infinite love, that God bears to them, and ſpecial care, that God hath of them. God bears a love to his people, not only like to the love of a Father, but infinitely beyond the love of a Father: the love of a Father to his Child, is but a dark reſemblance of the love of God to his Children: and therefore as God out-loves all Parents, ſo he out-does all Parents. His love is the love of an infinite Father, and therefore knows no bounds either of time or meaſure, and his relief is proportionable to his love; Relief wrought by an Almighty arm. See this clearly held forth, *Jer.* 31. 9. *I will cauſe them to walk by the rivers of water, in ſtraight way, wherein they ſhall not ſtumble,* And why? *for I am a father unto Iſrael, and Ephraim is my firſt-born.* Divine Paternity is one main ground of a Saints relief. This is the reaſon why he will cauſe them to walk by the rivers of water, in a ſtraight way, wherein they

ſhall

ſhall not ſtumble, becauſe he is their Father. You know what dear and tender affection a good Father beareth to his Children, eſpecially to his firſt-born. All the Childs wants, weakneſs, and grief, are a trouble and grief to the Father. Much more is God affected with the faintings and failings of his Children. So *Eſ.* 63. 8, 9. *He ſaid ſurely, they are my people: ſo he was their Saviour. In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his preſence ſaved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the dayes of old.* The Prophet alludes to the Song of *Moſes*, Deut. 32. 11. *As an Eagle ſtirreth up her neſt, fluttereth over her young, ſpreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: ſo the Lord alone did lead him.* How doth this ſilly creature beſtir her ſelf, when her young ones are in danger. She ſtirs up her neſt, ſhe fluttereth over her young, and ſpreadeth abroad her wings. And if all this will not ſecure them, ſhe takes them up, and bears them upon her wings. But how much more will God, who is the fountain of ſuch a diſpoſition in his creature, beſtir himſelf, and put forth his Almighty arm for the relief of his dear ones. He will bear them upon the wing of his providence, and carry them out of all danger: Satan ſhall not make a prey of them. If any thing will draw forth the bowels of a creature, the ſame will draw forth the bowels of God; yea much more, *Luke* 11. 13. *If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more ſhall your heavenly father give the Spirit?* Alas the love of the Creature is but a drop in compariſon of the love of God: and

therefore

therefore there muſt needs be more life and vigour in the love of God, then in the love of all creatures. As there is more heat in the body of the Sun, then in all its raies, were they all contracted into one ray: ſo it is here. And therefore if an earthly creature be ſo apt to tender the good and welfare of thoſe that belong to it, what propenſity is there in the heart of God, to relieve his people when they are in any ſtraights? Many an Orphan ſits down, and weeps over himſelf in hiscalamity, and thus bemoans his condition, If my Father were alive, he would not ſee me want, he would pity and relieve me in my ſad condition. Why, Beloved, there is never a child of God, that needs put finger in the eye in this reſpect, for your Father is alive, he lives for ever, he is an everlaſting Father; and as our Text ſaith, *A portion for ever.* And as he is a tender Father, ſo he is a kind Husband. So *Eſ.* 54.5. *For thy maker is thine Husband.* Though he will not relieve and help men, becauſe he is their maker; yet he will relieve and help all thoſe to whom he is an Husband. As long as marriage Covenant holds, God will take the care of his Spouſe, in ſickneſs as well as in health, in poverty as in riches, in weakneſs as in ſtrength. Nay, as a good Husband is moſt tender over his Wife in the time of her weakneſs and ſickneſs: even ſo is God to his Spouſe; ſhe ſhall want nothing that an Almighty hand can provide for her.

Reaſ. 2. Taken from Gods deſign in all his peoples ſtraights and neceſſities. God lets them fall into ſtraights, that he may have the glory of their relief. Whatever hand brings them in, it

is a divine hand that muſt bring them out. We may ſay of all a Chriſtians troubles and failings both of Fleſh and Spirit, as our Saviour ſaid of *Lazarus* his death, *John* 11. 4. *This ſickneſs is not unto death, but for the glory of God: that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.* *Lazarus* muſt die, yea, and be buried alſo, that Chriſt might have the glory of his reſurrection, and that after he had been dead four daies. His ſickneſs was unto death, but not to death eternal, for he had a ſpeedy reſurrection that made his death but a trance, or a long ſleep. Happy *Lazarus* (as one ſaith) though ſick and dead, to be an inſtrument of glory, to be given to God. Thus it is with Saints in their ſpiritual ſickneſſes: they are not unto death, but for the glory of God, that Chriſt may be glorified in their relief. Otherwiſe God is able to prevent them; but might nature alwaies have its courſe, there would be no room for wonders. Nature muſt ſometimes have a ſtop, that the glory of God may appear. Saints comforts and ſtrengths muſt lie a bleeding and die, that the glory of God may appear in their reſurrection. And wherein doth the glory of God appear more, then in ſuch a work as this? This is a glorious work, a work that outſhines all common and ordinary works of God. For God to breath upon dead and dry bones, that they ſhall live again; For God to bring a *Jonas* out of the Whales belly, where he was buried alive three dayes; For God to ſet *Job* upon his leggs again, and to put him into ſtock, both within doors and without, when he had ſtript him of all, and to make his laſt daies better then his firſt; this was a glorious work, a

work wherein God is much glorified. As the beams of the Sun reflected and sent back, renders the Sun very glorious: So 'tis here.

Reas. 3. Taken from the beautifulness of Relief in time of necessity. Every thing is beautiful in its season, *Eccl.* 3. 11. And relief is very beautiful in time of necessity, because it is seasonable. True necessity puts a decorum upon every act, that is requisite to be put forth therein. It would be very absurd to do that at one time, which may and ought to be done at another. Should those things, be done for a person in health, that are done in the time of his sickness, they would be very ridiculous; but done in season, and with due order, they are very comely. God therefore times his works well, and that puts a beauty upon them. Mans necessity, is therefore Gods opportunity, to express the riches of his mercy. He calls not the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Physick is not for those that are in health, but for the sick. So Divine Relief is for those whose flesh fails, and whose heart fails. Divine strength is for them, that have no might. And this beautifies Divine dispensations. For as God loves to beautifie the the house of his glory: so he loves to beautifie the works of his glory.

These are the Reasons of the Doctrine.

Now before I come to the Application, I must speak something to the doubts and scruples of weak Christians.

Case. Perhaps some will be apt to say; If it be true, that Divine Relief flows from God to his people, according to necessity, then I am afraid that I do not belong to God, because I have no experience

experience hereof. My flesh hath failed, and my heart fails; I, but I do not find relief coming in.

Resolution. Now to such I have three words, by way of Answer.

1. I beseech you take heed of charging God foolishly; for, for ought thou understandest yet, this may prove a vain and foolish denying that grace of God, which thou hast not received in vain. Thou mayest have received relief from God in many of these cases, and yet be insensible thereof. It may be with thee, as it was with *Jacob*: God hath been with thee, supported and relieved thee, and yet thou not know it. God conveys Divine Relief insensibly sometimes, as well as seasonably. When a man is in a swoon, many things may be given him to fetch him again, and to recover his Spirits, and yet the man insensible thereof: it may be so with thee. Thou hast been in a spiritual swoon, and God hath administred many heart-reviving Cordials, that hath brought thee to some life again; and yet thou maist be insensible thereof. It is good therefore to take a more strict survey of thy spiritual state; and perhaps upon examination, thou wilt find some prints of Divine Relief upon thy Soul. For as wicked men do not find their state so bad as it is, because they overlook it: so sometimes good men do not find their spiritual state so good as it is, because they overlook it. The piece of Silver that the woman thought she had lost, was in the house, although she knew not where it was, until she did light a candle, sweep the house, and seek diligently for it; as you may see, *Luke* 15. 8. God may have sent thee a token of his love, and thou

mayſt have it in thy heart, and yet not know it. Thou hadſt beſt ſet up a candle, even the word of God in thine heart, and by that light ſearch thy heart, and that diligently, and then thou mayſt find it. 'Tis true, ſome particular acts of relieving grace, are ſo full and ſtrong upon the heart of a Chriſtian, that he cannot be inſenſible thereof: but there are others, that are conveyed to the Soul, in a more ſecret and inſenſible way. God writes a Letter of conſolation to the Soul, ſometimes in ſo ſmall a character, that ſhe hath much ado to read it: it is hard for her to ſpell out the mind of God therein. God deals with Chriſtians, as ſome wiſe Phyſitians do with ſome of their Patients; they give them Phyſick, and they never know of it; ſomething muſt be put into their Beer, or ſomething into their broth: Even ſo God gives much relief to Chriſtians in their ſpiritual weakneſs, that the Soul knows not of. Little did *Jacobs* brethren know that they had their money in their Sacks, when they came homewards out of the land of *Egypt*: No, when they came to bait, and opened their Sacks, they found it. Even thus it may be with many a child of God; thy money, thy relief may be in thy heart, and yet thou ignorant of it. Perhaps when thou comeſt to refreſh, and lookeſt within to ſee what thou haſt, thou mayſt find that which thou dreamedſt not of.

There are three things that ſometimes hide relief from the eye of the Soul, and are an occaſion of the Souls miſtake.

1. God works gradually herein; The cure is not perfected the firſt day that God takes thee in hand,

hand, and ſome diſeaſes are long before they will be cured. Now here may be a great miſtake. If thou thinkeſt that God hath made no application to thee, becauſe thou art not perfectly cured of thy diſtemper, thou doſt wrong God exceedingly. Thou mayſt be in a tendency to a cure, God may have done much for thee, and yet thy ſore may run, and thy wound be very wide ſtill. Look again therefore, and ſee if there be never a Plaiſter upon the ſore: thou mayſt be in a way of cure, though not cured. Strength may be given in, although thou art not ſtrengthened with all might. Here may be rather matter of thankfulneſs, then of complaint, and thou ſhouldſt rather give God the glory of what he hath done for thee, be it never ſo little, then ſit down dejected, becauſe all is not yet done, that is requiſite to a perfect cure. Bleſs God for a little, and that will be the way to obtain more. Thou mayſt get that with a thankful ſpirit, which thou ſhalt never get with a froward.

2. God works variouſly: he relieves all his people, but not all alike: he cures all, but not alwaies with one and the ſame receipt, nor after one and the ſame manner and method. He varies his diſpenſations much; and therefore here may be a miſtake, that becauſe God doth not make the very ſame applications to thee, which he doth to another, therefore thou concludeſt, that God hath done nothing for thy cure, and relief. 'Tis here, as in the caſe of converſion. Some Chriſtians are apt to think they are not ſavingly converted, becauſe God did not work upon their hearts in the ſame way and manner, that others are wrought

upon. They were not brought under those legal terrours, nor held under a spirit of bondage, in that measure and degree, that others have been. But this is to tie up God to one way of working grace, when as he varies in his working. Even such a mistake may be in this case. Perhaps thou thinkest that God hath afforded thee no relief, because it came not in the same way to thee, as it hath done to others. 'Tis good to eye and observe the experiences of other Christians, but not to limit God by them. As the thoughts of God will be ever above our thoughts, so the waies of his providence will be ever past finding out. No man can trace God in some of his wayes, they are so mysterious. God doth not alwaies leave the print of his foot-steps where he goeth. The way of an Eagle in the Air, the way of a Ship in the midst of the Sea, the way of a Serpent upon a Rock, are not so untraceable, as many of the waies of God. It is mercy that God knows our Souls in the time of our failing, though we cannot know every way and method of his relieving us.

3. Sometimes distempers work cross, that what is appointed for the cure of one, is the occasion of another. 'Tis sometimes so in the body natural, and it may prove so in the body spiritual. When God is curing the weakness and failing of grace, and that begins to recover its wonted strength, then spiritual pride breaks forth, some self-admiration begins to bud out, and that puts God upon a new work. It is very rare for a Christian to be strong in some of his graces, and not to be too much exalted in his Spirit; or for God to lift the heart up in the sense of his love, and not grow wanton

and

and secure. 'Tis pitty that fair weather should do any hurt: But 'tis thus with some souls, that the Sun-shine of Divine Favour and the light of Gods countenance is so ill improved, that the heart grows worse with it, and like bodies that have long fasted, or are newly brought out of a languishing fit of sickness, take a surfeit of their diet, and fall again, it may be, into some worse disease. Now here may be a great mistake in this, if thou thinkest, that because new failings and new distempers break forth, God hath done nothing towards thy cure. Had not thy distempers wrought so cross, thou mightest have been upon thy feet again long before.

This is the first particular by way of answer to this case; Thou mayest have received great relief from God and not know of it. And I have shewen you wherein the mistake may lie; in the gradation or variety of Gods working, or in the cross working of soul distempers.

2. Thou sayest that thou canst not set thy seal to the truth of the Doctrine, because thou hast had no experience hereof. Consider therefore in the next place, that it may be, Gods time of relieving thee, is not yet come. God will come in a time, that is most seasonable, though not always when we expect it. Thy time may be come, but Gods time is not yet come. Gods hand is not shortened, nor his arm weakened, nor his heart shut up; but his time is lengthened out beyond thy expectation. Some are fain to wait a long time for relief, before it comes; their eyes fail, while they wait for God. So did *David*, *Psal.* 69. 3. *Mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.* It may be thou

haſt thought the time very long. I, but if God ſeeth it good thou muſt wait ſtill; We read in the Goſpel, of a man that had an infirmity thirty eight years; a long time, *Joh.* 5. 5. And what if God will try thee with thine infirmity as long, yet when his time is come, relief ſhall be given in; thou ſhalt be made whole. It may be thy caſe is not bad enough yet: God will take thee a pin lower yet; hee'l draw a little more blood from thee; and when there is ſcarce an hairs breadth between thee and death or ruine, then relief ſhall come. And therefore do not conclude, that becauſe thou haſt no experience yet of the truth of the Doctrine, that either it is not true, or thou haſt no ſaving intereſt in God; for though thou haſt no experience hereof yet, thou mayeſt have great and wonderful experience hereafter.

3. Conſider that a Saints intereſt in God depends not upon his ſenſe of Divine Relief, but upon the All-ſufficiency of Free-grace. Thy intereſt will hold when thy ſenſe thereof is loſt. Though thou mayſt think, that thou haſt loſt thy hold on God, and canſt not act faith on him, yet, if once thou haſt had an intereſt in God, God will not looſe his hold on thee. What though thou faileſt; thy fleſh and heart fails thee? yet Divine Strength cannot fail. *In the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength*, *Eſay* 26. 4. And as long as God hath an arm to hold thee, thou ſhalt not be loſt. Remember I pray thee (ſaith *Eliphaz* to *Job*) *Who ever periſhed, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?* *Job* 4. 7. The ruine and perithing of ſouls is when they are totally and finally for-

forsaken of God, that God will not own them, nor be a God unto them; when they are utterly and eternally driven from the gratious presence of God, never to see the well-pleased face of God: I, but who ever see the innocent thus to perish, or the righteous thus cut off? *Joh.* 10. 28. *I do give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.* What though thou canst not see that hand that holds thy soul in life; yet it will so hold thee, that thy spiritual life shall not be taken from thee. If those afflictions and distempers which make thy heart to fail, could cause the strength of Gods free grace to fail, then thou wouldst be in danger of an eternal ruine; they might prejudice thy interest in God: but though these have some influence upon thee, they have no such influence upon God. Now as long as they can have no influence upon the grace of God to weaken that, they can have no influence upon thy interest in God. And therefore do not conclude against thy self; for though thy hand of faith be grown so weak that it can't take fast hold on God, yet Gods hand is strong and that will hold thee fast. So saith the Prophet, *nevertheless I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right hand, vers.* 23. God held him fast, when he was ready to drop from God. He had lost the sense of his interest in God: I, but his interest in God was not lost. God was his God, though he did not know it. And so God may be thine, thou mayst have a sure interest in him, although thou canst not find the prints of Gods feet in thy soul, nor trace him in his ways of goodness towards thee. And know this, that it is better for thee to have an interest in God,

although

although thou knoweſt it not, then to have ſtrong preſumptions and be deceived. The want of ſenſe and feeling of our intereſt in God is no ſin, though it be a great affliction. Chriſt himſelf was without ſenſe; I, he was ſo deep in it, that when he was upon the croſs, he cried out, *Why haſt thou forſaken me?* I, but a groundleſs preſumption is a ſin, and leads to eternal ruine. None ever periſhed for want of faith of evidence; but hundreds periſh for want of faith of adherence. Oh, bleſſed is the man who believes, and ſees not; that can ſay with *Job*, *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him. Though my fleſh fails, and my heart fails, yet I will believe that he is my ſtrength and portion for ever.*

Thus I have anſwered this caſe, and ſo made way to application.

Uſe 1. Hence we may infer the ſad and woful condition of thoſe who have no intereſt in God: for they that have no intereſt in God, can expect no relief from God in a time of neceſſity. Wicked men have their failings, their fleſh fails them ſometimes and their hearts fail them; but no relief comes from God at thoſe times. Of all men they are moſt to be pityed: for there is no help, no relief for them. *If I be wicked* (ſaith *Job*) woe *unto me*, *Job* 10. 15. i. e. If I be wicked, I can expect no mercy; no comfort from God. Nay, hear what God ſaith himſelf to ſuch, *Eſay* 65. 13. *Therefore thus ſaith the Lord, behold my ſervants ſhall eat, but ye ſhall be hungry: behold my ſervants ſhall drink but ye ſhall be thirſty: behold my ſervants ſhall rejoyce but ye ſhall be aſhamed: behold my ſervants ſhall ſing for joy of heart, but ye ſhall cry for ſor-*

row

vex of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. The meaning is, God will not afford them any comfort or relief in times of distress. When God invites his own servants to feast with him, they must be shut out. And if God helps not, who can? No, without me ye shall bow down, saith God, *Esay* 10. 3. The wounds of the wicked are desperate wounds: there is no cure for them. Mark that of *Job*, *for what portion is there from above? and what inheritance of the Almighty from on high? is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?* The latter verse is an answer to the former, and the sense is this, all the portion and inheritance that the wicked can have from God above, is destruction and a strange punishment, *Job* 20. 2, 3. God is the strength and portion of a godly man, when his flesh and heart fails him; but the wicked have no other portion from God, then utter destruction & a strange punishment. So *Job* 20, 27, 28, 29. *The heavens shall reveal his iniquity and the earth shall rise up against him; the increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath:* This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed to him by God; Here is heaven and earth set against him, the heavens shall reveal his sin, and the earth shall punish him for his sin. But is there no relief for him in God? No, This is the portion of a wicked man from God. The case of such a man must needs be very black and dismal, when heaven and earth, and all the creatures therein are armed against him and mustred up by a Divine Hand: Where can he have any relief then? If

God

God were for thee, 'tis no matter what sets it self against thee? But if God be against thee, 'tis no matter what is for thee, it will not help thee. If misery and destruction be all the portion that God will allow thee, there is nothing then can save thee. If this be all thou hast to live upon to eternity, thou wilt have a miserable living of it.

Use 2. Hence all those that have interest in God, may fetch comfort: here is a well, out of which all good men may draw the water of consolation with joy. And what can afford greater comfort to you, then this Doctrine doth: that divine relief shall be administred unto you, in time of your necessity; when your flesh fails, and your heart fails, God will be the strength of your heart? It is a great comfort to a Merchant-adventurer, to have an assurance from the Ensuring Office, that his Adventure at Sea, shall be made good to him in case the Ship miscarries. Even so it may be to a childe of God, to have an assurance given him, that if all fails him without, and within, he shall have relief from God. Why, this Text and Doctrine gives thee an assurance hereof; and therefore, as *Job* said, hear it diligently, and let it be your consolation. You may take comfort in your greatest discomforts, that you shall have comfort. If there be enough in God to relieve and help you, you shall not want relief.

Obj. But the doubting Christian may say; I could take comfort in this truth, had I not walked so unworthy of that former relief, I have received from God. I can truly say, the Lord hath magnified the riches of his grace upon me; but I have abused it, and it may be just with him to cast me off

off for ever. He hath helped me when I was in a low condition, he hath ſtrengthened me when I was in a weak ſtate: but I have not made ſuitable returns thereunto, and therefore how can I expect relief?

Anſ. Now to ſuch I have five things to ſay.

1. The unſuitableneſs of a believer to, and his unworthineſs of relief cannot ſtop the current thereof. As divine relief is not adminiſtred to us upon the account of our worthineſs, as if we did merit it: ſo our unworthineſs of it, nor unſuitableneſs to it, ſhall not prevent it. Thy miſcarriages may cauſe God to correct thee with failing of thy fleſh and of thy heart, but cannot cauſe God to caſt thee off, if thou haſt an intereſt in him. No, that love, that moves him to correct thee for thy good, will alſo move him to relieve thee, when thou art under the rod of correction. A moſt full place for proof of this you have, *Pſal.* 106. 43, 44, 45. *Many times did he deliver them: but they provoked him with their counſels; and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheleſs he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry. And he remembred for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.* Here is the caſe; Firſt, God afforded them relief, *He had many times delivered them.* Secondly, Here is their unanſwerableneſs to that mercy. *They provoked him with their counſels.* Thirdly, Although they did deſerve to be caſt off, yet God did not caſt them off; but as a father corrects his child, whom he loves, ſo did the Lord correct them. *He brought them low for their iniquity.* Fourthly, Did he leave them then? No. *He regarded their affliction,*

affliction, when he heard their cry. And why was all this? *He remembred for them his covenant.* God did not eye their tempers so much as their interest, nor the frame of their Spirits, or carriage towards him, as his Covenant made to them. The unworthiness of a Christian comes, and pleads against the Souls relief in time of necessity, yet Gods Covenant will carry the day for it. And though a Christian may have too much forgotten God, yet God cannot forget his Covenant.

2. There is nothing more unbecoming a Christian, then to doubt of divine relief after experience had thereof. Thy other miscarriages and failings may seem worse in the eye of men, but nothing seems worse in the eye of God, then unbelief. There is no sin (as one observes) so often and so properly called a provocation, as unbelief is. It may be thou thinkest it but thy modesty and humility to make question, or to doubt of thy relief from God; and thou art afraid to rest upon God for it in a time of need: I, but thou little imaginest what thou dost herein: Why, hereby thou provokest God. So you may see, *Deut. 9. 7, 8. Remember and forget not, how thou provokedst the Lord thy God. Also in Horeb ye provoked the Lord.* Now how was that? You may see, *Exod. 17. 6, 7. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb,* &c. *And thou shalt smite the rock,* &c. *And he called the place Massah and Meribah, temptation and strife, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not?* They doubted of relief from God in the want of water, and hereby they tempted and provoked him.

Obj.

Obj. But it may be thou wilt say. *Israels* sin lay chiefly in doubting of Gods power: I, but I do not doubt of the power of God; I know God can do all things, and nothing is impossible to him: All my doubt is about the will of God, for though he can do all he will do, yet God will not do all he can.

Ans. Now to this I answer. To doubt of Gods will in reference to those things, which he hath promised to do, is as great a sin, as to doubt of Gods power; for herein thou callest the faithfulness of God into question, and makest him that is truth it self a liar; and therefore this must needs be a provoking sin. Nay further, the attributes of God are so linked together, as that no man sins against one through unbelief, but he sins against all. As he that breaks one command of God, breaks all: So he that tempts God in one, tempts God in all. He that doubts of the will of God revealed in a promise, doth implicitely doubt of the power of God, which is engaged for the performance of it.

3. Confidence in God for relief before thou standest in need thereof, is a notable help to the exercise of faith in a time of need. He that distrusteth God when he is full, will hardly trust in God when he is in want. I know that many will say, they believe in God, when all things go well with them; and yet when faith is put to a trial indeed, they discover that they have little or no faith in them: but he that shrinks before the trial comes, will hardly hold out in the trial. It is not an easie matter to raise thy Soul unto a believing frame; it is not done in an instant; there must be a daily exercise

exercise thereof. It is good for us to put faith to its trial, before God puts us upon trial, that we may have some guess at the strength of our faith. When a Christian by dayly exercise hath enured himself to live the life of faith, and to cast doubts out of his spirit, he can with greater ea selive by faith, when he hath nothing else to live upon. When a Christian can truly say, I have trusted God many years, and he hath not forsaken me, he will be apt to say, Shall I distrust him now, when my condition calls more for his help, then hitherto it hath done? I know whom I have believed (saith S. *Paul*) and I am perswaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. *Paul* doth not say, *I know whom I do believe, but whom I have believed*: he had maintained the life of faith, by a continued exercise thereof, and therefore was the more confident of relief from God in a time of need.

4. Though, through thy miscarriages, thou hast rendered thy self unworthy of relief in time of need: yet God is most worthy to be trusted for relief. Though thou dost not deserve relief at his hands, yet he deserves thy trusting in him. To trust in God, is a duty that all men owe to God. As all men are bound to love God, and to fear him: so they are bound to trust in him. And God deserves this trust. He and he alone ought to be the sole foundation of every mans confidence: but especially of those, who have had experience of him. It is common for one man to say of another, that is tried and found faithful, he is worthy to be trusted; much more is God. He hath bought thy confidence with the price of many mercies;

mercies; and shall God lose his purchase? this would be an act of injustice to him. And therefore say within thy heart, though I am not worthy of relief from God, yet because he is most worthy to be trusted in, I will trust in him for ever.

5. Though thou hast abused relieving mercy, yet thou hast not lionel it out. Relieving mercy is a fountain that can never be drawn dry. And as thou mayest fetch new supplies of strength to help thee against miscarriages; so thou mayest fetch new pardons of thy miscarriages. And the speediest way to obtain a pardon, is to exercise faith on God in Christ, for a pardon. So *Acts* 13. 38, 39. *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.* Observe this; by Christ all that believe are justified. Now if God justifies, who can condemn? *Rom.* 8. 33, 34. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of the father, who also maketh intercession for us.* Now if thy sin be pardoned, then there is nothing, which thou canst possibly fear will prevent thy relief; and therefore be perswaded to set faith on work in Jesus Christ. Go out of thy self to him for righteousness, that thou mayest be found in him; and believe that with God there is still mercy for thee, and plenteous redemption. Thus did *David* fetch in comfort against a time of need, *Psal.* 130. 3, 4. *If thou Lord shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord who shall stand? but there is for-*

ſinneſs with thee, that thou mayeſt be feared. I wait for the Lord, my ſoul doth wait, and in his word do hope. i. e. If Gods eye ſhould be wholly fixt upon our ſins, and not upon Chriſts righteouſneſs, we could not be juſtified; we ſhould never be able to ſtand in his ſight. And if our eye be only fixt upon our ſins, and not upon Gods mercy in Chriſt, we ſhould never attain to any confidence in God for relief in time of need. I but now, ſaith *David* upon this ground: *I can wait for the Lord, and hope in his word.* Yea, upon this very ground he exhorts others to hope, *v.* 7. *Let Iſrael hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy.* Still there is mercy; though we have lived upon this ſtock of mercy all our daies, yet there is enough ſtill; nay, there is nothing ſpent of it. And therefore take home the comfort hereof with you, that divine relief ſhall be adminiſtred unto you in the time of your greateſt need. When your fleſh fails, and your heart fails, God will be the ſtrength of your heart, and portion for ever.

FINIS.

THE PROPHET'S Amazing Vision,

Of a Wheel, in the middle of a Wheel.

OR,

The admirableneſs of

DIVINE PROVIDENCE,

Opened, proved and improved; In a Sermon, preached at the Cathedral in *Norwich*, July 30. 1673. With ſome additional Application.

By *Samuel Blackerby* Miniſter of the Goſpel at *Stow Market*.

LONDON,
Printed for *Nevil Simons*, at the *Princes Arms* in S. *Paul's Church Yard*. 1674.

THE

PROPHET'S

Amazing Vision,

Of a Wheel, in the middle of a Wheel.

The Admirableness of

DIVINE PROVIDENCE,

Opened, proved and improved; In a Sermon, preached at the Cathedral in Norwich, July 30. 1673. With Some additional Appellation.

By Samuel Shaw, Minister of the Gospel at Stow Market.

Published by Edward Symons, at the Printed Book in St. Paul's Church Yard. 1674.

SERMON III.

Ezek. 1. 16. *And their work, and their appearance, was as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel.*

THeſe words have both their height of glory, and alſo their depth of difficulty: much excellency wrapt up in them, but hard to be underſtood. As the richeſt Pearls, and pureſt Mines lie loweſt in the earth; and the ſweeteſt Kernel hath the hardeſt ſhell: ſo the richeſt and moſt precious Truths are wrapt up in a myſtery, not obvious to every mans underſtanding, but muſt be ſought as Silver, and ſearched for, as for hid Treaſure. As you have it, *Prov.* 2. 4. Much pains muſt be taken, proper and ſuitable means uſed, and yet, when all is done, we muſt pray with *David*. *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wonderous things out of thy law.* And is not here a wonder? for here is an inviſible glory, repreſented to us by a viſible thing; divine counſel ſet forth in an Hieroglyphick: For in the foregoing verſe, we have a wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces, and here we have a wheel in the middle of a wheel. This, this is the amazing glory.

By the one wheel upon the earth, with its four faces, ſome do underſtand the Univerſe, or viſible World; which is as a wheel, round, and ſubject to wheelings and turnings, mutations and changes, and that in all the four Quarters thereof; and much may be ſaid for this interpretation. I ſhall only take leave to add this; that this viſible World is to be conſidered, as conſiſting of, and containing in it, thoſe ſecond cauſes, inſtruments and means, whereby God wheels about his own deſigns and plots, together with their ſeveral appearances and faces, and yet with one likeneſs *in conſpectu Dei.*

This is one part of the Viſion, the wheel with its four faces.

The other is the wheel in the middle of a wheel. This may be taken two waies.

1. Tranſverſly. 2. Comprehenſively.

Firſt tranſverſly; and ſo two things are obſervable in it.

1. That the wheels ſeemed croſs to one another, and entangled one in another, as the lines and circles in a Globe, cut and croſs one another; ſo ſay ſome. And if ſo? they do moſt lively repreſent the croſsneſs, intricacy, and entangledneſs that is in all ſecond cauſes each to other, both in their natures and their motions. The whole world is but entangled and croſs wheels; but I ſhall not detain you herein. And therefore,

2. There are others that ſay, that all the wheels made up one ſpherical figure, touching themſelves at right angles, that without turning or delay, they might run and roul any way, on any ſide. And if ſo? then they are a moſt lively

emblem

emblem of that harmony that is in all things; for though croſs in themſelves, yet they ſerve to make one globe, and do carry on one ultimate deſign. According to that of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8. 28. *All things work together for good.*

This is the import of the wheels, if taken tranſverſly. But

Secondly, They may be conſidered comprehenſively; one wheel within another. As in ſome Watches, there are wheels one in another, and one that moves the reſt.

And if ſo? then here we have a Divine Myſtery that outſhines the former, *viz.* That amazing glory of Divine Providence, which works in all created beings, moves them, and ſets them to work, as the great and ſprincipal wheel moves the leſſer and inferiour. And this, this is the true form and work of the wheels. The wheel of divine providence is ſet up in all wheels, as the prime and principal wheel.

Obſer. From hence we ſhall obſerve, That divine providence is admirable, and Soul-amazing. And this will appear, if we take into conſideration, theſe three particulars.

1. The *eſſe*, The being and conſtitution of this divine wheel.

2. The *motus*, The motion thereof.

3. The *myſterium*, The myſtery thereof.

And, O! that my diſcourſe upon theſe might be *verbum in Rota.*

Firſt, The being of this divine wheel is very admirable: for it is made up of infinite and tranſcendent glory.

1. Of the light and counſel of Divine Wiſdom.

2. Of the ſoveraignty of Divine will.

Both theſe beams of glory are infinite and tranſcendent, and do make up one moſt glorious and incomprehenſible wheel in the divine being. 'Tis true, they are diſtinguiſhed as to us, yet they are but one in God. And ſo ſaith the School-man. *Cum eſſe, & intelligere in Deo indiſtincta ſunt; ipſum per ſuam ſcientiam cauſare res oportet, adjuncta tamen voluntate.* Or rather take it in the words of the holy Apoſtle, *Eph.* 1. 11. *He worketh all things after the counſel of his own will.* For as the will of God, is the practick principle in the God-head: ſo it is a will full of Divine light, wiſdom, and counſel, directing it in all its determinations and reſolutions. Hence it is, that as there is not the leaſt ſpot of error herein; ſo there is not poſt-repentance thereof, *Pſal.* 33. 11. *The counſel of the Lord ſtandeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart from generation to generation*: for it is the counſel of his will; or divine will joined with the higheſt light, wiſdom, and reaſon. An infinite will ſparkling and ſhining with infinite counſel and reaſon; and indeed, the God-head it ſelf muſt be divided, or elſe a ſeparation cannot be made between the will of God and the wiſdom of God; no! (but as I hinted before) they make up one wheel in the divine being, and this is that which Divines call eternal providence. It is nothing elſe (as I humbly conceive) but one eternal and undivided act of Divine Will, moſt wiſely determining and appointing all things with the moſt appoſite means and higheſt end, and that after a moſt exact order and method. *Ipſa ratio ordinis rerum in finem providentia in Deo nominatur.* 'Tis true, as the

pre-ordained

pre-ordained means, ſo the pre-ordained ends are various; I, but the higheſt and ultimate end of all his plots and contrivances, workings, and adminiſtrations, is the glorifying and exalting the riches of his Eſſential Glory. This I ſay, is the ſupream end, the end of ends, the Corner Stone, whereon all the deſigns and purpoſes of God do lean, and the mark at which they are levelled; All other ends, though co ordained with this, do ſtrike ſail to this, and in this reſpect are but as means appointed to effect it; For God being the firſt and the laſt, the higheſt being and the beſt good, muſt needs be the higheſt and the ultimate end of all his own counſels.

And that in two reſpects.

1. In reſpect of his *Philautie* or ſelf-love, which is above all that love, that he bears to any other being; Great is his love to the man Chriſt Jeſus, So *John* 5.20. *The Father loveth the Son, and ſheweth him all things that himſelf doth, and he will ſhew him greater works, that ye may marvel.* I but though his love to Chriſt be thus great, yet not ſo great as that which he beareth to himſelf: nay take all that Love which he expreſſeth to all beings below himſelf, and you will find it to fall abundantly ſhort of that love, which is in God to himſelf; For all Divine Acts are proportioned to their objects, and diverſified by them, that love which God bears to a created being is proportioned to ſuch a being; and that love that God beareth to himſelf, is proportioned to himſelf, as he is an uncreated and an infinite being. Now as there is a vaſt diſproportion between a created and an uncreated, a finite and an infinite being;

ſo

so there is a vast disproportion between the love that God hath for the one, and that which he hath for the other; he being the highest being, must needs love himself with the highest love, and therefore cannot but propose himself, and his own glory as his highest end; For else he should express greater love to a creature, then to himself, to a less good, then to the best good. But again,

2. It must needs be so, in respect of the nature of an end, especially of the highest end. For this lieth in two things,

1. In terminating the act.
2. In so doing to give rest to the agent.

For as the end gives a beginning to the act, by drawing forth the agent: So the agent is carried on to the attaining of that end, and cannot rest until that be accomplished; the truth is, the work is never perfect but in that, and there is no rest but in that.

Now I beseech you tell me, what is there in any being below the supream, that may be the highest end in these two respects; For can it be imagined that a less good can draw forth God to act, when as there is a greater? Surely, no; and therefore he being the highest and the best good, must needs be the highest and ultimate end of all his counsels, determinations and workings; for in himself, and his own glory.

1. His work is perfected. And
2. He himself hath content, rest and satisfaction. *Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats* (saith God, *Psal.* 50. 13.)? No! but offer unto

to God thanksgiving; This, this is the joy and delight of his heart.

Thus we have given a dispatch to the first consideration of this Divine wheel.

Secondly, Consider the motion thereof, and you will find, that an admirable being hath an admirable motion; And therefore it is represented to us by a *Wheel in the middle of a Wheel*, noting out the intensness of its motion; As 'tis said of *Elias*, that he prayed in prayer, *i.e.* he was intense in prayer. *So a Wheel in the middle of a Wheel*, notes the intensness of its motion; it hath heat and fervour in it, which makes its motion quick and powerful, and is an argument of its supereminent excellency; and incomparable use; 'tis true, creature motions are sometimes too intense, and therefore do miscarry, and are of dreadful consequence. I, but that proceeds from their irregularity and disorder. Zeal is good in a good act; I, but if it be not regulated and ordered by a Divine Light, and an Holy prudence, it puts the agent upon a great hazard of miscarrying therein. As a ship is never in greater danger, then when her sails are spread, fill'd with a strong gust of wind, and her self upon the greatest speed, in case that she be not well ballast, or wants a skilful Pilot. I, but though it be thus oft-times in creature motions, yet 'tis not so in the Divine; For in these there are not only heat, but light; And therefore in Sacred Writ, there is frequent mention made of the eyes of the Lord. So 2 *Chron.* 16. 9. & *Zech.* 4. 10. *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth.* Noting out, that all the motions of this internal and Divine Wheel are luminous

spinous motions, full of light; as 'tis always in motion, full of activity, vigour and life, so it is admirably regular in its motions; it turns and rolls in a streight line. When the eyes of this wheel look various ways, yet the wheel carries on one design. I say, this one wheel in the middle of a wheel is all light, all eye. And therefore there can be no miscarriage in its motion; No! as its determinations, so all its motions are regular and and orderly.

This is that which Divines call actual providence; which differs from eternal no otherwise then execution from determination.

Eternal providence is as the head, and actual providence is as the hand; Actual providence is the evidence of eternal, 'tis the breaking up of Divine Counsel. But you must note this, that eternal providence did not cease to be, when actual providence first took place, but actual providence waits on eternal, that Divine Counsel may be put in execution, and all things acted according to the heavenly pattern; For so it is said in the forementioned place, *Ephes.* 1.11. *That God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*

Eternal providence is as the womb, wherein all things are conceived, and actual providence is as the midwife, whereby they are brought forth, as the nurse whereby they are preserved and brought up, and as the governess whereby they are ruled and ordered in their station and motion.

And so there is a threefold motion in the Divine Wheel,

1. Pro-

1. Production.
2. Conservation.
3. Gubernation.

First, Production, for actual providence is constantly exercised in delivering Divine Counsel of its off-spring; and nothing but the Active Providence of God can bring to pass the Counsels of God; Eternal Providence is Gods thinking of things, and actual providence is Gods speaking of things, that the thoughts of God may become a work of God. Yea, let him but speak the word and the thing is done, as you have it, *Psal.* 33.9. *He spake the word and it was done. Let there be light, and there was light.* Thus, thus (I say) this one Wheel in the middle of a Wheel, Wheels about all Gods Divine Counsels and predeterminations into actual being; let things be never so great, glorious, and unexpected, yet they are wheeled about into actual being by a word of his mouth: Divine Plots and contrivances do not, shall not prove abortive; but are and shall be brought to light in their due time. So *Gen.*41.32. The thing is established, and God will bring it to pass; 'tis first established in the Divine Mind, and then brought to pass by a Divine Hand; And therefore saith the Prophet, *Zeph.* 2. The beginning. *Gather together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired, before the decree bring forth.* The Divine Mind had conceived, and time was now at hand, when it should be delivered of its off-spring. And indeed, Divine Providence is never idle, but always at work, in bringing forth that which is conceived in the Divine Mind, and nothing

thing shall hinder. I will work (saith God *Esay* 43. 13.) and who shall let? The question implies a negation, *q. d.* None shall let. No 'tis not in the power of earth or hell, to scotch this Divine Wheel in its motion; As God wants no wisdom to contrive; so he wants no power to execute; and therefore may well be resolute herein, and say as you have it, *Esay* 46. 10. *I will do all my pleasure.* But

Secondly, Shall a Divine Off-spring be left to the wide world for maintenance and preservation? No! Divine providence is as well exercised in the one as in the other. What she brings forth, she will bring up, to that which she gives a being, to that she will afford Divine Influence for her sustentation and support in being. And

This is called by Divines, the manutenency of God, because God doth uphold things by a Divine Hand. *Thou hast made* (saith *Nehemiah, Chap. 9. 6.*) *and thou preservest all things*; and the Apostle asserts the same, *Heb.* 1. 3. *He upholdeth all things by the word of his power, or by his powerful word.* For as the word of God gives a being; so it upholds in being; thou holdest our soul in life, saith *David*, *Psal. 66. 9.* The four wheels are upheld by this one wheel, or else they would soon turn into their first nothing, *annihilatio est substractio influxus divini.* Let God hide his face, and then the wheels are scotched, but let him withdraw his supporting influence, and then wheels are no wheels. I, but though we read of destruction and dissolution in Scripture, yet we no where read of annihilation. 'Tis true, sometimes

God

God is pleased to make use of a wheel for a time, and all that time hath his work upon it, and then of a sudden lays it aside; I, but he never lays any wheel aside, until he hath wrought and effected as much by it, as he intended; and indeed, as he hath various works, and various wheels to carry on his work by; so sometimes he moves and works by one, and sometimes by another. I, but as long as he hath any work to do by any one, so long he maintains and upholds it in motion, as well as in being; Hence is that of *David*, (*Psal.* 31.15.) *My times are in thy hand.* My time of being, and my time of motion, *q. d.* I am one of thy wheels; I, but thou art in this wheel for sustentation and support. I cannot be, I cannot act, unless thou beest as a Wheel in the middle of a Wheel.

Thirdly, As actual providence brings forth and brings up, so it governs: This sits at the Stern, and Steers the course of all instruments and secondary causes, and directs them in all their motions unto the designed end. Hence it is, that God is called King of Kings, & Lord of Lords, because the government of all things lies upon him; He is not only omnipotent but omniregent; So *Psal.*103.19. *His Kingdom ruleth over all.* And therefore we have it in the vision of the wheels, *vers.* 18. *That their rings were full of eyes round about.* They were (as one saith) *stellatæ oculis*, bedeckt with eyes, as the heavens with stars; and therefore no wonder if they are regular in their motion, in reference to their designed end. Nay give me leave to add this, as a thing most remarkable; that Divine Providence doth so rule in all, and over-rule all motions

motions and actings, as that the greateſt irregularities are made ſubſervient to the higheſt and moſt glorious ends; 'tis true irregular motions cannot be called regular; I, but 'tis as true, that they are improved by the wheel within the wheel for great advantage. Inſomuch that light oft-times ſprings out of darkneſs, and good out of evil. 'Tis true none ought to take encouragement from hence to act irregularly, and to croſs Divine Rule revealed and laid down in the Word; No! at his peril be it, that doth ſo. I but 'tis as true, that as all things work together, ſo they work for good, yea, they terminate at the laſt in the glory of God. God ſerves himſelf by the diſſervices of the creature; yea, experience tells us, that Divine Providence ſometimes takes occaſion from the very ſins & corruption of mans nature to turn men from ſin unto God. That which (in it ſelf) is a means of alienation of the heart, is made uſe of as an inſtrument to work it up into communion with God. As good example draws, ſo ſometimes bad example (when out of meaſure bad) ſerves to ſet out the wickedneſs of mans heart (when left to it ſelf) & to drive men out of themſelves, and out of a ſtate in nature, yea to bring them into a ſtate of grace. In a word, ſome had never been ſo good, if others had not been extreamly bad. However this I hope none will deny, that Divine providence moves in the turnings and motions of created beings, and makes them inſtrumental to carry on a moſt glorious deſign. How often doth God convince and affect the hearts of ſinners by thoſe Lectures which he reads to them out of the book of the creature? Yea, ſometimes the wheel-

ings

ings and turnings about of States and Nations in the world; sometimes the changes that come upon mens persons or estates are strangely improved for the change of their hearts. Sometimes an evil feared or felt, a good hoped for or enjoyed; expectation frustrated, or hope deferred; comforts multiplied, or turned into crosses; prayers heard or denyed, are sanctified and blest'd for spiritual and soul-advantage; yea, there are many men had not been happy, if others had not been miserable: the fall and ruine of some, hath proved the rise of others. *Oh, the wheel in the middle of a wheel.*

Thus you have heard something of the motion of this divine wheel, I but you do not see it. For,

Thirdly, This is a mystery, a very great mystery: for it is *a wheel in the middle of a wheel*; a wheel that no mortal eye ever saw, a wheel that the most sublime understanding cannot reach, and as the wheel it self is a divine secret, hid in the brightness of its own glory, so is its motion. And therefore saith the Psalmist, *Psal.* 77. 19. *Thy way, O God, is in the sea, thy paths in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.* And again, Psal. *Thy way is in the Sanctuary.* I, in that Sanctuary into which none can enter, but the high Priest, unless the Veil be rent. Hence comes the prophetick Spirit to be of use in its time; for had men been able to foresee the plotting and contrivances of divine providence, or to trace it in its workings, the Spirit of Prophecy had not been so necessary as it was. And therefore God raiseth up an *Ezekiel*, and by an immediate vision instructs him, that he might let the people under-

ſtand their future ſtate and condition; and indeed, 'tis in Gods light that we ſee light. 'Tis true, external wheels are viſible, inſtruments and agents may be ſeen; I, but as the wheel within the wheel is inviſible, ſo are all its workings upon the wheels, untill they are brought off. And therefore is that counſel given, *Prov.* 27. 1. *Boaſt not thy ſelf of to morrow, for thou knowſt not what a day may bring forth.* Time travelleth with divine counſels; and in its ſeaſon brings them forth; I, but little do men know what is in the womb thereof, untill ſhe be delivered. And therefore ſaith the Lord, *Eſ.* 55. 9. *As the heavens are above the earth, ſo are my wayes above your wayes, and my thoughts above your thoughts.* And indeed, an infinite mind muſt needs have tranſcendent conceptions and thoughts, ſuch as are above the reach of a finite mind. Now the wayes of God being correſpondent to the thoughts of God, they muſt needs be very dark and myſterious unto us. And hence it is, that men talk ſo much of dark, and complexed providences. Not that there is any darkneſs in them. *Non caeco impetu volumina vota*; the wheels are not carried on blindly. No! but becauſe their motion is above our apprehenſion. And therefore 'tis ſaid, *ver.* 18. *As for their Rings, they were ſo high that they were dreadful.* Things that are above our reach, are not only Soul-amazing, but ſometimes Soul-terrifying, and do put us in a poſture of fear and trembling. When we know not what to think of things, we are apt to dread them; that which is an object of admiration, is ſometimes a cauſe of fear and dread. Hence it is, that ſometimes, thoſe providential admini-

administrations, that are big with Soul-mercies and refreshing comforts, are by our dark understandings mis-represented, and rendred as dreadful to us, as if they were nothing else but signs of divine wrath and vengeance. Even as Christs walking upon the Sea towards his Disciples for their relief and comfort, put them into a pannick fear, because they thought that they had seen a Spirit. However, whether this be alwayes the effect or not, yet this is certain, that providential plots and works are very high, very mysterious. We may say more truly of God, then we can of any man, that he walks in the clouds; that of the Psalmist, *Psal.* 18. 9. if, full for the purpose. *He bowed the heavens and came down, and darkness was under his feet.* And again: *He made darkness his secret place.* For the truth is, nothing of God, or the counsels of God is further known, then he is pleased to reveal. And so the Apostle argues, 1 *Cor.* 2. 11. *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him, even so, no man knoweth the things of God, but the spirit of God.*

Hence it is that four things fall out frequently.

1. Carnal reason confuted.
2. Carnal confidence and hope disappointed.
3. Unbelief reproved.
4. A well grounded faith honoured and confirmed.

First, Carnal reason is often confuted by the mysteriousness of providential administration: for they often tell the rational and wise men of the world, that their apprehensions and affections are a meer *non-sequitur*. And therefore Saint *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 20. Triumphs over them with four sar-

carnal questions, *Where is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?* Where are they? alas, they are forced to get into an hole, and to hide their heads, as men confounded and amazed; one act of providence scatters them, and makes them fly, at least strikes them dead & dumb. They that were continually scribling, cannot now write. And they that thought themselves the only wise and knowing men, now see that they know nothing. And they that would never be quiet, but would be ready to quarrel with every one they met with, that were of a contrary opinion, and spake wisdom among them that are perfect, are now silent, for that which they accounted reason and wisdom, appears to be folly; and that which they accounted folly, appears to be reason and wisdom. Oh, what a change doth a divine providence work in some mens heads, at least, what a check doth it give to some mens apprehensions. And hence is that counsel given by the Lord himself to all such men, *Zech. 2. ult. Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord, for he is raised out of his holy habitation.* And oh, that men were so wise as to take this counsel in due time.

Secondly, Hence it is, that carnal confidence and hope, is often disappointed. Men sow the wind, and reap the whirl-wind; expect good, and meet with evil; look for light, and behold darkness. So *Mich. 1. 12. The inhabitants of Maroth waited carefully for good, but evil came down from the Lord.*

Thirdly, Hence also it is, that unbelief is often really reproved. *O fools, and slow of heart to believe,*

here, is a frequent meſſage that an unbeliever meets with in the very acts of divine providence. Men will not believe *that* ſuch and ſuch things (though promiſed in the word) can be effected, becauſe they are not able to conceive of the way, nor know the means whereby they ſhall be effected. Turn to 2 *Kings*, 7. 1, 2. and there you ſhall find this fully exemplified. For there 'tis ſaid, that when *Eliſha* told the people of *Samaria*, that the famine ſhould be turned into plenty: An atheiſtical Lord anſwered, *That if God ſhould make windows in Heaven might this thing be?* I, but ſee how his Atheiſm and unbelief was reproved. *Behold, thou ſhalt ſee it with thine eyes, but ſhalt not taſte thereof.* And moſt full is that of the Prophet, *Eſ.* 26. 11. *Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not ſee. But they ſhall ſee, and be aſhamed.* And indeed, oft times it falleth out thus, that thoſe providences, that do not work to mens conviction and converſion, do work to mens confuſion at the laſt.

Fourthly and laſtly, Hence it is, that the faith of believers (bottom'd upon a divine word) is honoured, and confirmed.

1. 'Tis honoured, for hereby faith is tried, and holding out is commended. That faith that can truſt God upon a bare word of promiſe, and rely upon unſeen providences, is an honourable faith. And therefore is *Abraham* ſo much commended for his faith, becauſe he followed God in the dark, at a word of command, *And againſt hope believed in hope, that he might become the Father of many Nations, according to that which was ſpoken, ſo ſhall thy ſeed be*, Rom. 4. 18. And indeed, as true

faith gives glory to God (as you have it *ver.* 20.) so God gives glory unto faith. So you may see, 1 *Pet.* 1. 7. *That the trial of your faith (which is more precious then Gold tried in the fire) may be found unto praise, honour and glory, at the appearance of Christ.*

2. As 'tis honoured, so 'tis confirmed. Divine promises: give faith its *esse*, its being through divine influence, and providential administrations, gives its *parvo esse*, a further being. He that believes in God unseen, will trust him more upon experience of his fidelity in performing his word. So *Psal.* 9. 10. *They that know thy name, will trust in thee.* A literal knowledge of God, a knowledge by report and hear-say, may cause faith to flutter; I, but a knowledge of God by experience will cause it to fly, yea, to towre aloft with strength. Now that I may wind up the Doctrinal part of this divine proposition. Give me leave to say, that, that which doth confute carnal reason, disappoint carnal confidence, reprove unbelief, honour and confirm the faith of Gods elect, must needs be a Soul-amazing glory.

Applicat. 1. Infer. Is it so, that the providence of God is like a wheel within a wheel; then this speaks dread and terror to the wicked: for this one wheel within the wheel, counterworks them in all their waies and workings; the wheel within the wheel, is above all wheels. Take it in Scripture language, in the thing wherein they deal proudly, God is above them, *Exod.* 18. 11. The providence of God waits upon all the counsels, devices and imaginations of Ungodly men, to detect and frustrate, yea, to turn them upon their

own

own heads, to their eternal woe and grief. So ſaith *David*, *Pſal.* 9. 16. *The Lord is known by the judgement which he executeth, the wicked is ſnared in the work of his own hands.* Alas, there is no man that plots any evil againſt God, his ordinances, appearances and truths, but puts his feet into a ſnare, out of which, he is not able to extricate himſelf.

On ſome, God lets their conſcience looſe to be their own tormentors, with intolerable horrors, and terrors; and ſo he dealt with *Cain*.

Sometimes he arms the creatures againſt them, even the leaſt, as well as the greateſt. That treacherous man *Phillips*, who betrayed Mr. *Tindal*, was devoured of Lice.

Sometimes God leaves them to themſelves, as the executioners of his divine vengeance; *Judas* went forth, and hang'd himſelf.

Nay, ſometimes the immediate hand of God falls upon them and ruines them. When they cry peace, peace to themſelves, then ſudden deſtruction breaks forth upon them. The wheel within the wheel, turns their own counſels and plots upon their own heads.

2. *Infer.* Is it ſo, then this doth adminiſter abundant matter of unſpeakable comfort to the godly. 'Tis a breaſt full of the milk of ſpiritual conſolation, whereat thou mayeſt ſuck, and be abundantly ſatisfied. So you may ſee, *Pſal.* 16. 8, 9. *I have ſet the Lord always before me, therefore my heart is glad.* A clear ſight of God in Chriſt is a heart-rejoycing ſight; and ſo to behold God in his adminiſtrations, as the wheel within the wheel, that turns all things about to his own

glory and our eternal good; this is a taking and a comforting object. The word of promise is a Christians daily food, and the works of providence are his cordials, and banquets, wherewith God bears him up, and keeps him from fainting. Many a Soul would fall into a swoon, if he were not stayed with these Apples, and comforted with these Flaggons. I shall say to you, as *Job* to his friends, *Hear diligently, and let this be your consolations*, Job 21. 2. So I say, observe, consider, and meditate upon the providences of God, and let them be your consolation; and that, both in your doing and suffering the will of God, whilst you live here. Let this bear up, animate, and fortifie your Spirits against all fear and discouragements, that you meet with in your Christian course. When God calls you forth to perform hard, difficult and discountenanced duties, call to mind and remember those assistances which he hath provided in the Covenant of Grace, and exhibited to his servants of old, when he hath called them forth to such duties. You know it was an hard and difficult work, for *Joshua* to succeed *Moses* in the conduct of *Israel*, into the Land of *Canaan*: he was not only to meet with much opposition from the Inhabitants of *Canaan*, but to conflict with the frowardness and perverseness of *Israel*; *Joshua* could not expect better usage from them, then *Moses* had had experience of. Yet observe how providence did fortifie and encourage him, *Josh.* 1. 7 first Verses. And turn to *Hebr.* 13 5. You shall find the same laid in for all Christians for the future. This may be our consolation, that God will not leave us nor forsake

forſake us; but be with us for our aſſiſtance, as he was with *Moſes* and with *Joſhua* in their work. How God did manage and aſſiſt his ſervants at all times, in every work whereto he hath called them, Scripture ſpeaks fully and largely; Read *Ezek.* 2. 6. *Ezekiel met with briars and thorns; they were with him in his work, and yet ſaith God to him, be not afraid.* What difficulties and diſcouragements did the Apoſtles and ſervants of Chriſt meet with in their diſpenſing the Goſpel all along the primitive times; I, but how mightily were they aſſiſted and carried through all; Read *Act.* 13. 45, 46. The more they were oppoſed, the bolder they were. And ſo in reſpect of ſuffering, let the providence of God ſupport and comfort you. I have read this of *Chryſoſtom*, that when *Eudoxia* procured his baniſhment; He ſaid thus, *None of theſe things trouble me, but I ſaid within my ſelf, if the Queen will, let her baniſh me, the earth is the Lords and the fulneſs thereof: if ſhe will, let her ſaw me aſunder*, Iſaiah *ſuffered the ſame: if ſhe will, let her caſt me into the Sea, I will remember* Jonah: *if ſhe will, let her caſt me into a fiery furnace, or amongſt wilde beaſts, the three children and* Daniel *were ſo dealt with: if ſhe will, let her ſtone me, I have* Stephen *and the* Baptiſt *for my bleſſed companions*; go tell her, *nil niſi peccatum timeo.* Thus ſhould we ſupport and comfort our hearts by the providences of God exerciſed towards others, and eſpecially by the comforts, that others have received from God, in the ſame ſufferings and torments, that we at any time do or may endure. Biſhop *Ridley* writing to *Latimer* in Priſon,

son, saith, *ever since I heard of our dear Brother* Rogers *his stout confession, and departing, I never felt any lumpish heavinesse in my heart, as sometimes I did before.* And further, when you hear or read of the providence of God in preventing evil determined by evil instruments against his Church and people, this should raise your spirits to a greater pitch of consolation, and holy courage. And indeed, how many wonders hath God at all times wrought in preserving and hiding his Saints and people from intended and designed plots of mischief and ruine? is almost incredible. I remember what is recorded in the life of *Dionysius Areopagita*; that when he was caused by *Sisinius* the Prefect to be thrown to hungry wilde beasts, they would not tear him, and into an hot Oven, it would not burn him. The like is reported of S. *Ambrose*; for a certain wizard sent his spirits to kill him, but they returned answer, that God had hedg'd him in as he did *Job*: another came with a sword to his bed side to have killed him, but he could not stir his hand, until, repenting, he was restored, by the prayer of S. *Ambrose*, to the use of his hands again. So the *Circumcelliani*, being not able to withstand S. *Austins* preaching and writing, sought his destruction, having beset the way, wherein he was to go his visitation; but by Gods Providence he missing his way, escaped the danger. And one saith of *Luther*, That *Luther* a poor Frier should be able to stand against the Pope was a miracle: that he should prevail against the Pope was a greater: and after all to die in peace, having so many ene-

mies,

mies, was the greateſt of all. When this was repreſented unto *Moſes* in a type, it did much affect his heart. Oh, ſaith he, I will turn aſide and ſee this great ſight. It was a great and glorious light to ſee the buſh in the fire not conſumed: but more to ſee the Church under great perſecution, and yet not deſtroyed: the people of God maligned and oppoſed, and yet to live: this is a miracle, a ſoul comforting providence. But oh then, what a ſurpaſſing comfort, doth the conſideration of Gods improving providences, afford to the Saints? thoſe providences (I mean) whereby he doth extract the beſt good out of the worſt evil; So that the ſoul may ſay as S. *Paul* of a great evil; *I know that this ſhall turn to my ſalvation. Phil.* 1. 19. *And therefore I rejoyce.* So 2 *Cor.* 12. 9, 10. *Moſt gladly therefore will I rather glory in mine infirmities.* And again, *Therefore I take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes for Chriſts ſake, for when I am weak then am I ſtrong.* S. *Pauls* weakneſs was converted into ſtrength; he never was ſo ſtrong in the inward man, as when he was weakeſt in the outward; and herein he rejoyced. God doth ever bring about ſome glorious deſign (as it were) at a back door, and a contrary way; that the wrath of man ſhall praiſe God. And doth not this ſpeak comfort, and courage to the people of God in all their dark and cloudy fits? ſurely it doth; and that which kills the hearts of others, may be the greateſt reviver of their hearts; For their greateſt ſorrows, ſhall turn to their greateſt joy; and their extremity of miſeries, ſhall prove their higheſt *Exod.* 3. 2, 3, 4.

glories;

glories; their Winter, ſhall bring forth a flouriſhing Spring; and their mournful Seed-time, a moſt plentiful Harveſt. And therefore, let me exhort you in the words of the holy Apoſtle, *Heb.* 12. 12. *Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.* Be not diſmayed or diſcouraged at any thing that falleth out: For know, that there is a wheel within a wheel, that worketh and moveth in all things; yea, that ordereth and diſpoſeth them ſo, that not one iota or tittle of Gods counſel ſhall fail of accompliſhment. *Melanthon* knowing the rage of the Papiſts, and *Ceſar*'s threats, was much troubled, and gave himſelf wholly up to grief, ſighs and tears: Whereupon, *Luther* writes to him thus, *I extreamly diſlike your exceſſive cares, with which you ſay, you are almoſt conſumed: If the cauſe be bad, let us revoke it, and fly back: If it be good, why do we not truſt God in his promiſes? If Chriſt be the Conquerour of the World, why ſhould we fear it, as if it would overcome us?* As for *Luther* himſelf, he had an undaunted Spirit: For when our King *Henry* the eighth, had written bitterly againſt him; He makes this Anſwer, *Let the* Henries, *the Biſhops, the Turk, and the Devil himſelf do what they can, we are the Children of the Kingdom, worſhipping and waiting for that Saviour, whom they, and ſuch as they, ſpit upon and crucifie.* The truth is, there is no condition whereunto the Church of God in general, or any Chriſtian in particular can fall, but they may hold up their heads, and lift up their hearts, to an high pitch of conſolation therein; if they do but lay the providence of God to heart, and conſider how that works in all, to bring about

the

the will of God. They may ſay, as *Shecaniah* ſaid to *Ezra*, *There is yet hope in Iſrael concerning this thing.* And as *Mordecai* to *Heſter*, *Comfort and deliverance ſhall come.* And as Saint *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, in the temptation God will make a way for an eſcape. *He hath delivered, he doth deliver, and in him we truſt, that he will deliver.* What though Satan, and all the confederates of darkneſs, were now at work to deſtroy one Soul, and to pluck it out of the hand of Chriſt; yet providence will preſerve it. What though Antichriſt, and his adherents are combining and plotting againſt Chriſt and his members, his truths and ordinances; yet providence will over-ſhadow them. And Beloved, if every Errour in the Nation were an hundred, and every Heretick a thouſand; yet truth, and the profeſſors thereof ſhall prevail, *Acts* 5. 38. Providence hath her ſecret waies of working, that cannot be found out, and though we are not able to trace her way; yet we may aſſure our ſelves of her iſſue. What was it but providence, that hath maintained the Goſpel this 1600. years? What, but providence, that hath kept up a preaching Miniſtry and Sacraments hitherto, maugre the malice of all their oppoſers? 'Tis true, God may ſuffer truth to be eclips'd, and the glory of the Church to be much darkned, and the number of Chriſts followers to be abated; and yet turn the wheel of ſecond cauſes, ſo as that there ſhall be ſuch a remnant kept, as ſhall multiply and increaſe more then ever. Nay, if all means ſhould fail, and all inſtruments periſh, yet Gods work, and his deſign ſhall go on without the leaſt prejudice or hurt,

Eſ. 63.

Isa. 63. 5. We may take up the words of the Prophet *Habakkuk*. Chap. 3. 17. *Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoyce in the Lord: I will joy in the God of my salvation.* 'Tis all one with God, to work without means as by means, and 'tis not out of any necessity, but to magnifie the riches of his wisdom, power, and bounty, that he doth make use of any: and therefore, when God comes down from the hills into the valley, we should not fear, nor be despondent. Yea, whatever the subject be whereon he works, though never so dead and dry, he can form it according to his own mind and will; dead and drie bones he can cause to live: As you may see, *Ezek.* 37. *begin.* Rocks shall flow with water, the Sea shall give way for Israels passage, the Ravens shall turn Caterers and Cooks, *Abraham* and *Sarah* shall grow young again, and be fertile; nay, the very heath, and barren wilderness shall become fruitful, and pleasant places to dwell in. In a word, God doth whatever he pleaseth, his hand is no way shortened or weakened by working: And therefore he is pleased to make daily repetitions of his old wonders, that the people of God may have full and strong consolation.

3. *Infer.* Is it so; then this serves as a spur to quicken Saints to the performance of holy duty, and to teach them to be admirable therein. Sirs, God is admirable in his working for you, and therefore this should draw out your hearts to admirabl:

mirable workings for God: your affections, and your actings should be as so many wonders. True Christians should be the worlds wonders; and should set men a wondering at the beholding of the admirableness of their conversations. Sirs, you have admirable Spirits, admirable Principles, an admirable Life, admirable Rules to walk by, and an admirable reward promised at the last; and surely, all these are strong engagements unto an admirableness of living. And yet besides all these, let me tell you, that you live upon the wonders of divine providence; 'tis a wonder, that sinners live on this side Hell, and enjoy so many forfeited mercies and comforts, as you do enjoy. And therefore you may well take up the the words of the holy Apostle; seeing all these things are thus, *What manner of persons ought we to be.* For I tell you, that a common life is no way suitable to Gods admirable dispensations: No, God saith to all such, as our Saviour did once to his Disciples, *Matth.* 5. 47. *What do you more then others?* For 'tis not enough for you that live by, and under the turnings of this divine wheel, to be good in the general; but you must labour to be excellent. Every motion of this wheel, is a new engagement upon your Spirits; take a few directions herein: For an admirable life lies chiefly in a conformity to the life of God; no life is admirable, but the life of God, and our conformity thereunto. And hence it is, that the life of God, is set up as our pattern of imitation, *Matth.* 5. 44, 45. 48. *But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully*

ſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you: that ye may be the children of your father which is in heaven: for he maketh his Sun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect. The Child is but the Father multiplied, 'tis Man in a new edition: And ſo he that lives the life of God, is nothig elſe then a new edition, and a new copy of the image of God. Holineſs in life and power, is the image of God drawn upon the heart, and life of man. Saints are living pictures of their heavenly father; they are Gods looking-glaſſes, wherein he loves to view his own excellency and glory. Hence it is, that they are ſaid to be near to him; and that he taketh pleaſure in them, *Pſal.* 148. *ult.* 149. 4. As women will have their glaſſes before their eye, and take pleaſure in a true glaſs, that gives a true reflex of their beauty. So Saints are a people near to God, and God delights in them; as they are in Chriſt, ſo he loved them: but as he lives in them, ſo he delights in them. Now that which is Gods delight, is the moſt admirable, and may well be our wonder. Nothing ſhould take up our hearts, thoughts, time and ſtrength, ſo much as the life of God: All other things ſhould be of little force to take up our hearts; But take heed, leſt a form of godlineſs keep you from the life of God. Religion is now in faſhion, and every one (almoſt) makes ſome outward ſhew; I, but few do live the life of God.

2. In high and moſt eminent deſigns for God: He that knows God to be all in all, muſt be all for God. Moſt full is that of *Paul*, *Phil.* 1. 21. *To me to live*

is

is Christ. i. e. All my designs are for Christ; for the advancing his designs in the world; that he may be all, and have all subjected unto him. A Christian should do nothing, but plot and design for Christ; he should be of a publick active Spirit, and lay out himself, and his abilities to the utmost for God. 'Tis recorded of *Levi*, that he knew neither Father nor Mother. And *Paul* saith, *Thus henceforth, we know no man after the flesh*: We should be wholly for God. A Christian should not know such a thing as Self, in his designs and aims; self-interests, self-glory, self-comfort, and all should be thrown down at the foot of God. All external wheels, are but instruments acted by this internal wheel, and ordered and disposed of so, as that this may have the glory of all. Shall the Ax boast it self against him that heweth therewith, or the Saw magnifie it self against him that shaketh it? *Es.* 10. 15. Nothing more improper and absurd. Oh Beloved, take heed of carrying on self-designs, under a pretence of acting for God. Wicked men will do so; but you must go beyond them: You must do more then they can do.

3. In living by faith upon God; 2 *Cor.* 5. 7. *We live by faith and not by sight.* A Christian ought not to hang by the eye-lids, eying and looking at external wheels, and second causes only; but to exercise faith upon the wheel within the wheel. This is that which must actuate and inliven all second causes, or else they cannot work. What is it that thou dost desire? this must bring it to pass; *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit*, Zech. 4. 6. Would'st thou have thy corrup-

tion mortified, thy temptation conquered, thy graces strengthened, thy comforts enlarged, thy fears prevented, thy prayers heard; rest not upon the external wheels, but upon the wheel within the wheel. Means must be used, but not trusted in; God alone is the object of a Christians faith. Say therefore, *In vain is salvation hoped for from the multitude of hills and mountains: but in the Lord our God is salvation*, Jer. 3. 23. And let it be said of you, as it is of *Abraham*, Ro. 4. 18, 19. *Who against hope, believed in hope.* When all instruments are dead, Ordinances dead, Comforts dead, Graces dead, heart even dead; yet give glory to God by believing in him, who never dies. And for this end, follow the example of the Prophet, *Psal.* 77. 10, 11, 12. *I will remember the years of the right hand of the most high. I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.* Yea, wouldst thou set this internal wheel, on work, wouldst thou move that? Why then, set faith on work, this is that whereby divine providence suffers it self to be moved. How came *Abraham* to be the Father of many Nations? but by the movings of this internal wheel; and what set that a going, but the faith of *Abraham*? And therefore it is said, that he believed in hope, that he might become the Father of many Nations. Beloved, if ever you would set any instrument, or inferiour wheel on work, you must move the greater wheel: So it is here, 'tis God that must move, and you must set God on work by faith. An active faith will not let God alone; it gives him no rest, untill he hath set all second causes

on

on work, and accompliſhed the deſired mercy. Now in this, you go beyond all moral men; they may make uſe of means: I, but they can't believe; they can't ſet the great wheel on work.

4. In fixing your hearts upon things that are above. Let the conſtant openings of your Souls be for the entertainment of Heavenly enjoyments. And this is a wonder, *Rev.* 12. 1. A Chriſtians heart ſhould be in Heaven, and the world under his feet. The Earth is Gods, and a good mans foot-ſtool; thou mayeſt walk upon it, but not be buried in it. Moſt excellent is the Apoſtles Rule, 1 *Cor.* 7. 29, 30, 31. *But this I ſay, Brethren, the time is ſhort. It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they poſſeſſed not; and they that uſe this world, as not abuſing it: for the faſhion of this world paſſeth away.* And this was the Apoſtles glory, that the world was crucified unto him, and he unto the world, *Gal.* 6. 14. He looks upon all, as ſo many dead corps and carkaſes.

Fourth and laſt Inference, If this divine wheel be ſo admirable and glorious, then this teacheth you to maintain a conſtant communion with it. For you are little wheels; I, but what will you do, if this divine wheel, be not as a wheel in the middle of a wheel; what ſhall act and move you in order to your comfortable winding up: Sure I am, you will be like *Sampſon*, when his Lock was cut off. Your ſtrength is departed from you, and you like Inſtruments laid aſide, and of no uſe. I, but if God be in you, and with

you, then you ſhall go forth in the ſtrength of an omnipotent power, and be admirable in working, yea, you ſhall have cauſe to admire the wheel within the wheel, and ſing with *Moſes*, *Who is a God like our God, glorious in holineſs, fearful in praiſes, doing wonders.* Yea, with the heavenly Quire, ſaying, *Amen, bleſſing and glory, wiſdom and thankſgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever.* Amen.

FINIS.

A

Divine Paradox,

OR, A

PRISONER at LIBERTY

AND HIS

JUDGE IN BONDS;

Being a Subject Treated of, before the Right Honourable, the Lord Chief Justice *Hales* at an Assize holden at Saint *Edmunds Bury*, In the County of *Suffolk*, *March*, 27. 1669.

By *Samuel Blackerby*, Minister of the Gospel at *Stow Market*.

LONDON,
Printed for *Nevil Simons*, at the *Princes Arms* in S. *Paul's Church Yard*. 1674.

Acts 24. 25. *And as he reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgement to come,* Felix *trembled.*

THat I may obſerve the watch-word given, and confine my diſcourſe to the time alotted for it; I ſhall (at preſent) wave my uſual courſe, and lay aſide the threds, by which I was reſolved to have ſteer'd my paſſage to the Text: And yet, before I can attempt to anatomize, and breath any vein of truth therein, I muſt crave leave, to ſtrip it of a double paradox, which (at firſt view) it ſeemeth to be dreſt up in. For,

1. Here is a Priſoner in liberty.
2. A Judge in bonds.

Saint *Paul* the Priſoner, and *Felix* the Judge; the one we meet with in the entrance into the Text, the other in the cloſe; and both afford us matter of admiration.

Firſt, The liberty of St. *Paul* the Priſoner; for here we find him at liberty to preach, and preaching with liberty.

1. At liberty to preach: That an Apoſtle

ſhould be a Priſoner, is much; but that he, who was impriſoned upon the account of preaching, ſhould have liberty (whilſt a Priſoner) to preach, and that before his Judge, this is more. Not many daies before, he was accuſed by a famous Oratour, and libell'd againſt with a deep charge of high miſdemeanours, and capital crimes, and that with ſo much artifice and ſubtilty, that it is a wonder, that a ſentence of death had not paſſed upon him, according to the malevolent expectation of his malicious enemies; and he for ever deprived of his liberty to preach any more; and yet, to ſpeak in the *Ciceronian* Dialect, *Vivit, imo vivit, & in Senatum venit.* He lives, yea, he lives to preach: And that

2. With liberty; I, μετὰ πολλῆς παῤῥησίας, with much liberty and boldneſs: For neither the grandeur of the Auditor, nor the experience that he had of a former durance, no, nor his fear of future, had any ſuch influence upon him; as to ſeal up his lips, or tempt him to play the Sycophant, or flattering Courtier, that thereby he might have gained an enlargement of his preſent liberty: No! but in ſtead thereof, he levels a piercing, and a wounding arrow at his breaſt, and reaſoned of ſuch things, as he knew were wanting in him: For the Text tells us, that *he reaſoned of righteouſneſs and temperance.* And where is the man almoſt in the Apoſtles caſe, that dare preach ſuch things before ſuch an Auditor? the more is Saint *Paul* to be admired, for his boldneſs and liberty in preaching, and reaſoning before *Felix.*

This is the firſt Paradox.

Secondly, Here is a Judge in bonds; for as the Apoſtles

Apoſtles reaſoning, argues his liberty; ſo the Judge his trembling, argues his bondage; and ſo 'tis ſaid int he Text, *Felix trembled.* For this is certain, that there are no ſuch pinching, and ſoul-tormenting bonds, as legal and ſervile fear puts upon, and binds the Soul with. 'Tis ſaid of *Joſeph*, that the irons entered into his Soul: I, but none go ſo deep, nor wound ſo much, as the bonds and irons of ſervile fear; I, but is not this a paradox, that he, that had the power of civil binding, and looſing others, ſhould be put into bonds, and that by his Priſoner? I ſay, do not theſe things ſeem ſtrange, are they not knots hard to be untied? Why, ſurely they are; and therefore I ſhall take the aſſiſtance of three hands, to untie them.

1. *Manus authoritatis*, The Priſoners call.
2. *Manus integritatis*, The Priſoners integrity.
3. *Manus reatus*, The Judges guilt.

Firſt, The Preachers Call, gave him liberty to preach before his Judge? 'Tis true, *quod officium*, he had his authority from God, but *quod exercitium officii*, he received authority from man; For ſo it is ſtoried, *ver.* 24. that *Felix* ſent for him; and who might better open the door, then he that ſhut it? And when was the time for the Apoſtle to enter, but when the door was opened? 'Tis true, he took no more liberty, then was given; but, what was given, that he took; elſe, he might have been check'd with ingratitude to the Judge, (who gave him a call, to preach at this time) and alſo, with unfaithfulneſs to his Lord and Maſter, who gave him his grand and Apoſtolical Commiſſion; and thus the knot begins to be unlooſed, and the wonder to ceaſe. And

therefore

therefore give me leave, to make use of a second hand; And that is,

Secondly, The Preachers integrity; for this gave him liberty and boldness in preaching: 'Tis true, *Si sat accusatio, quis innocens?* If to accuse were sufficient, the Preacher had been guilty, & the Judge might well have retorted, *a turpe est doctori.* But whoever reads his defence, in some preceding Verses, shall find him to keep his ground, and hold fast the sense of his integrity, although his enemies hoped, to have given him a rout. Now, as the old Proverb hath it, *bonæ causæ spem adesse comitem.* I shall only add, *bonæ conscientiæ*, to make it full and clear. A good cause and a good conscience, teacheth confidence and boldness; and you have a better warrant for it, *Prov.* 28. 1. *The righteous is as bold as a Lion.* And indeed, that Minister of the Gospel, that doth ὀρθοποδεῖν, may boldly, and freely ὀρθοτομεῖν. He that lives the life of St. *Paul*, may couragiously preach the Doctrine of St. *Paul.* He that is righteous and temperate, may with confidence, and without a blush, reason of Righteousness and Temperance, unless he be frown'd into a meal-mouth'd baseness, by his Auditors. And 'tis as true, that had the life of the Auditor in the Text, been consimilar, and proportioned to the life of the Preacher, he might have sate out the Sermon, with as much comfort, as it was preached with confidence: For *hic murus aheneus, nil conscire sibi.* But as none wrangle against the truth, but the erroneous; so none dread it, but the guilty; and this leads me to the third hand.

Thirdly, The Judges guilt; for if *Josephus*, and

and *Tacitus*, may be believed in their Reports, he was notoriously guilty; but we need go no further, for a proof thereof, then his carriage towards the Preacher, and the naming of his Wife *Drusilla*: for her, by enticements and magical arts, he allured to himself from her Husband; and him he detained Prisoner two years unjustly, because he would not give him a Bribe: And therefore no wonder, that as the Prisoner reasoned, the Judge trembled. And thus you see, there is a wonder, and no wonder; or the knot, and difficulty that lay before us, untied, that we may consider the words of the Text, as they lie naked before us; and therein you have three Considerables.

1. *Modus concionandi*, The manner of the Apostles treating his Auditor.

2. *Subjecta materia concionis*, The subject matter of his Sermon.

3. *Effectus utriusque*, The effect of both.

The manner was convictive, *He reasoned.*

The matter was substantial, summ'd up in three Topicks; *Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgements to come.*

The effect was glorious; for as the Apostle reasoned of the Topicks, *Felix trembled.*

All very considerable. For,

The manner serves for a Gospel-Ministers imitation. The matter serves for all mens information. And the effect gives us a ground of expectation, that ministers so reasoning, as the Apostle did, and preaching such matter, as he preached, may (through divine influence) meet with the like success of their labours. And,

Upon this account, have I chosen the Text, and

of

of theſe things, I ſhall take liberty, to reaſon at this time.

1. By way of explication, as to part.

2. By way of application, as to the whole.

Firſt, by way of explication. And the

1. Thing that offers it ſelf to be explained, is a Kernel, hid in the firſt word of the Text, διαλεγόμενος. For I find it variouſly rendred; ſometimes to diſcourſe or confer, contend and diſpute; but in the Text, to reaſon, and to argue: For that is the moſt convictive way of preaching, or teaching; and, ſo conſtantly uſed by the Apoſtle, that he tells the *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 2. *That his preaching was not with enticing words of mans wiſdom: but, in demonſtration of the ſpirit.* Not (I bumbly conceive) as ſome would have it, and do aſſert it, by working of miracles, as if the Apoſtles ſucceſs of the Miniſtry, flowed only from that. But (as a learned Annotator ſaith) with demonſtrations, fetch'd out of the very marrow of the Scriptures. 'Tis very true, Miracles ſerved much, to evince the truth of the Goſpel, and to beget an head conviction in many, that were ſpectators thereof: but demonſtrations drawn from the letter of the Goſpel, was the *vehiculum ſpiritus ſancti*; the medium of divine influence, to beget an heart-conviction: For, no ſword will pierce the ſpirit of man, but the ſword of the Spirit, the Word of God. And therefore ſaith the Apoſtle, 2. *Cor.* 4. 7. *We have this treaſure in earthen veſſels*, ἵνα ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως ᾖ τοῦ θεοῦ. That the excellency (or the hyperbole) of the power may be of God, and not of us. This Sword, and this Treaſure, we find in the ſecond Conſiderable in the Text. And that is,

2. The

2. The Subject matter of the Apostles reasoning, for whosoever consults it, will not find ἀνθρακὰς ἀντὶ τοῦ θεσαυροῦ, a fruitless flourish of words, in stead of a rich Mine of desirable treasure. No! but matter of an universal concern; for it concerns all, both superiours, and inferiours, innocent and guilty, to be instructed in these topicks, righteousness, temperance, and judgement to come. The two first relate to man, and the third to God. 'Tis mans duty to be righteous, and temperate; and Gods Prerogative to judge; The two first are two Cardinal vertues, and the third imports a judiciary trial of men thereby, at a time fixt in Divine minds; men must be vertuous, for they shall be judged. There is a time given to men to exercise vertue, and that is the time present; and there is a time, for men to be judged by the rule of vertue, but that is to come. S. *Paul* reasons of both, and so shall I. First, Of the Cardinal vertues instanc'd in; and herein, I cannot but observe the Apostles imitation of a Master Builder, that having laid a good foundation, *ad solidum & in solido*, leaves it not naked, but erects the superstructure proportionate thereunto; For having presented his auditour with the summe of the Gospel, in preaching faith in Christ to him (that he might not appear a *Solifidean* or *Antinomian*) he reasoneth of righteousness, and temperance, which are the proper and genuine superstructure, upon that most choice and excellent foundation; For though faith in Christ alone justifies in a figurative sense, yet that faith, that justifies, is not alone; For as faith in Christ justifies the person, so vertue justifies faith, and renders

ders it to be of a Divine Stamp, even the faith of Gods elect. Faith, without works, is dead, and works, without faith, do not please him, whom, above all, we ought to study to please. Well therefore, did the Apostle, as it became an Apostle, to build the silver, gold, and pretious stones of righteousness and temperance, upon the glorious, and precious foundation of faith in Christ; for righteousness imparted, is a most suitable structure to righteousness imputed, and renders the whole fabrique uniform, and beautiful; the cost indeed is Gods, but the beauty is mans. And therefore the moralist (in dressing up his moral Lady) saith, that her head is wisdom, her eyes prudence, her heart love her spirits charity, her thighs justice, her health temperance, and fortitude her strength; For that person, that is endowed with these vertues, is a lovely and beautiful person, although he hath no other ornament upon him; Nay I hope, without offence to Ladies, I may call him a beauty; Others may be as beautiful as *Absalon*, as fair as *Alcibiades* in their bodies without; and yet have *corpora turpissima intus*, as was said of the last; foul and deformed souls. Yea, may justly be accounted *Reipublicæ morbi*, the botches of the Commonwealth. Alass, with many, to be religious, just, and temperate, is too mean, too base, in their esteem: in their eye, vertue is the vice, and vice the vertue; *pudebat me non fuisse impudentem* (as S. *Augustine* hath it in his confessions) may be written upon the foreheads of some persons, and none of the inferiour sort. For they do not only resist the impressions of grace, but trace the stamp of nature and hope, with *Herostratus*,

to

to be memorable for villany. But I muſt not be excurſive, being confined to an Apoſtolical method, and to an inch of time, in my reaſoning hereof. And therefore, once more I crave your leave, that I may reaſon of righteouſneſs and temperance apart, as the Apoſtle did. And,

1. Of righteouſneſs; and herein (not to trouble you with the various definitions, and deſcriptions thereof, laid down in ſundry Authors) I ſhall take the liberty, to give you this deſcription of it, that it is an exact conformity unto law, in our dealings with others, according to the ſphear wherein God hath ſet us.

Firſt, I ſay, it is an exact conformity unto law, in our actings towards, and dealings with others; And therefore, ſome will have the Latine word, to derive its pedigree from a word, in that language, that ſignifies Law; and ſay, *juſtitia habet nomen a jure*; for this is an undoubted rule, *id tantum poſſumus, quod jure poſſumus*; that, and that onely is juſt, which is juſtifiable by Law, either Humane or Divine; either Literal or Æquipollent. 'Tis very true, a diſcourſe of Law, becomes *Weſtminſter Hall*, or an Inn of Court, better then Gods Sanctuary: and yet I hope, a Goſpel Miniſter may take liberty to preſs all men to make Law their Rule; I, and the Law of man, as far as it is conform to the Law of God. For I may ſay, of that as *Tertullus* of *Felix*; *By that we enjoy great quietneſs in our rights and poſſeſſions.* But,

Secondly, This is not all; for righteouſneſs is an exact conformity to Law in the ſphear and place wherein God hath ſet us; for that is a righteous act, when performed by one; which is unrighte-

ous,

ous, when done by another: And therefore if St. *Peter* draws his ſword, (though in defence of his Maſter) and cuts of *Malcus* his ear, he receives no better reward, then a ſharp rebuke from his Maſter, the King of righteouſneſs, and Prince of peace. And if *David* cuts off the lap of *Sauls* Garment, his heart ſmites him for it. 'Tis true, a national reformation may be very neceſſary, at ſome times, and in ſome caſes; but not to be undertaken by private perſons, *Renuente Magiſtratus*, againſt the expreſs and declared will of the ſupream Magiſtrate. And hence ariſeth that common diſtribution of Juſtice, into *diſtributative & commutative.* The firſt whereof refers to the Magiſtrate, and the other to the Privateer.

1. I ſay, Diſtributative Juſtice belongs to the Magiſtrate, *qua Magiſtrate*; for he properly, and principally is φύλαξ τοῦ δικαίου καὶ τοῦ ἴσου. The keeper of Juſtice and Equity; and if I may not ſtile him Gods Ark, becauſe that was, in an eſpecial manner, ſanctified to keep the Law in? Yet, I may be bold to call him Gods Cabinet, to whoſe truſt, this precious Jewel is committed. He is *cuſtos utriuſque tabulæ, & jus dicens.*

But when I ſpeak of Magiſtrates in general, you muſt know, that under that notion, all their Aſſiſtants, and Officers, are comprehended, in reference to the execution of Juſtice; not only the Judges and Juſtices, that ſit upon the Bench; but alſo many of thoſe, that ſit below; not only a Superviſor, but every Civil Officer and Juror, is concern'd herein. For in ſome reſpects, the Sword of Juſtice is put into the hand of all theſe, eſpecially at ſuch a time as this is. And that,

1. At

1. At the Bar of *Nisi prius*; in determining, and silencing controversies about right, between party and party.

2. At the Crown Bar. And that,

1. In protecting the Innocent, and therefore Magistrates are called the shields of the earth, because the shield serves for defence and protection.

2. In rewarding the well-doer,

3. In punishing the offender.

These things I might have insisted on, but a word to the wise is sufficient, and many words to others will not be of force, and therefore I shall forbear to offer any thing more by way of explication of the nature of the duty; and only give you some directions, as the time will permit, and so imitate the Apostle in reasoning. And the,

1. Rule that I shall lay down is this, that justice must be done *cito*, speedily, and you have an express for it, (*Ezra* 7. 26.) which (though it came from an heathen King, yet) 'tis approved of by the Holy-ghost; 'tis this, *Whosoever will not do the Law of God, and the Law of the King*, (for these must not clash.) Let judgement be executed speedily upon him; and yet give me leave to tell you, that *Vespasians* motto upon his Coyn, will do very well in the case, *Sat cito, si sat bene*. That is soon enough, that is well enough. And therefore,

2. Take this rule also, that justice must be executed *prudenter*; with judgement and discretion. 'Tis easie to cut a knot, but hard to unty it; and therefore Magistrates must be Seers, as well as Ministers, or else they will not be Ministers to the

Subjects for good; And indeed, upon this account, they are called heads of the people. I, but what is an head, without an eye? and if the eye be dark how great is that darkneſs? And therefore, ſaith one, blind Miniſters are the Peſt of the Church, and blind Magiſtrates are the Peſt of Kingdoms; and yet give me leave to tell you; That theſe eyes muſt not be covered, nor blinded. And therefore ſaith *Solomon*, *Prov.* 25. 2. *'Tis the glory of God, to conceal a thing: but the honour of Kings to ſearch out a matter*, i. e. It concerns all, that are intruſted with the execution of juſtice, to ſearch out the matter. I, but *hic labor hoc opus eſt*; they muſt exerciſe patience, and prudence herein; or elſe ſhoot at rovers, and wound where they ſhould apply a healing balſom; or elſe be Phyſitians of no value, in giving a Cordial, inſtead of a Purge or Corroſive; They muſt, therefore, have an Eagles eye, as well as a Ladies hand; that they may hit the diſtemper; Protection to whom Protection is due, puniſhment to whom puniſhment is due. Let not one have that portion of juſtice, that belongs to another; And therefore as one word in the Hebrew Language ſignifies an ear, and a pair of ballances, ſo the ear of all thoſe, that are entruſted with the execution of juſtice, ſhould be as a pair of ballances, firſt to weigh things, and then to determine. Let not him that ſits upon the Bench be a Merchant to carry the ballances of deceit about him, and juſtice will be duly adminiſtred; When *res cum re, cauſa cum cauſa, ratio cum ratione concertet.* When many words of a different complexion, are dropt into a Judges, or a Juſtices ears, then is the time for

בחן

for them to weigh, and consider things wisely, before they give out their sentence; and that made much for the commendation of *Philip*, that he always kept an ear open for the Defendant.

3. Justice must be executed *universaliter*, impartially, without respect of persons; And therefore the common Emblem of Justice is drawn with covered eyes; to intimate, that, though a Magistrate should not be blind as to causes, yet, as to persons he should. Nay, in this respect Magistrates should be no men of this world, but like the Angels in heaven, who know no such thing as a relation or a friend; And say with the Apostle, (*2 Cor.* 5. 16.) *We know no man after the flesh*; friend and foe, rich and poor, old and young, must have justice done them; And so the Law of God requires, *Levit.* 19. 15. *Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty.* And again, *Exod.* 23. 3. *Thou shalt not countenance a poor man in his cause*, *i. e.* If his cause be unjust; the rich must not be injured, that the poor may be countenanced; For Magistrates are not called to do acts of Charity, but acts of Justice. God himself cannot endure, that any one should be wronged under a pretence of doing him right; And therefore saith, (*Esay* 61. 8.) *I the Lord love judgement, I hate robbery for burnt offerings.* Now if we may not unjustly take from men, to give to God; certainly, we may not take from man, to give to man; no! not from a foe, to give to a friend; not from the rich, to give to the poor, nor from the poor, to give to the rich; but as the Law was made, so it

ſhould be put in execution, without reſpect of perſons; not rendered like *Tardolus* his web, wickets for ſome, and ſnares for others; an unlike judgement muſt not be given to thoſe that are alike, nor alike judgement given to thoſe that are unlike in point of offence. A Magiſtrate muſt not weigh the big looks of the ſons of *Anake*, nor make any difference in civil, or criminal cauſes, betwixt the mighty *Nimrods* of the nation, that declare their ſin as *Sodom*, and the cowardly lurchers, that dare not ſhew their faces; A powerful oppreſſour, a valiant Dueller, a gallant high-way-man, and a mad Hector, ſhould receive no more favour from the Sword of Juſtice, than a ſneaking Cut-purſe.

4. Juſtice ſhould be adminiſtred *gratis*, not for filthy lucre ſake, but for juſtice ſake; and that upon the account of a Sacred, and Divine Statute, *Deut.* 16. 19. *Thou ſhalt not reſpect perſons, neither take a gift; for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wiſe, and prevent the words of the righteous*; and indeed experience tells us, that if a man hath the eye of an Eagle, a moſt piercing eye, yet a gift, a bribe, like a vail or covering, muffles him up in darkneſs, that he cannot diſcern a difference in things, or cauſes; and hence it is, that ſometimes, not he that hath the beſt cauſe, but the beſt purſe carries the day; a bad cauſe is good weight, and a good cauſe found too light to paſs; or to ſpeak in the Language of one of the Ancients; *auro loquente, iners omnis oratio*; all motions and pleadings (though never ſo much to the purpoſe) are of little, or no effect. 'Tis true the Holy Ghoſt compares juſtice and

Greg. Naz.

and Judgement to waters, and gives an expreſs charge, (*Amos* 5. 24.) *That judgement ſhould run down as waters, and righteouſneſs as a mighty ſtream:* I, but 'tis ſad, when Angels trouble theſe waters, that they cannot run clear and ſmooth. However, this I am certain of, that there is a ſad complaint, in many places of the Nation; that either Juſtice is not adminiſtred, *ſat cito*, not ſoon enough, or not *ſat bene*, not well enough. And truly, when I conſider mens boldneſs, and impudence in their lewdneſs, I am ſomewhat jealous, that there is ſome reaſon, or ground for the complaint: For men ſweat, and drink, and whore, and commit all manner of wickedneſs, as if they had received a a Law, to do ſuch things. For, *qui non prohibet peccare, cum poſſit, jubet.*

But I muſt not inſiſt upon this particular any longer, for there are ſome perſons in a lower Orb, that I muſt a litle reaſon with; and that, in reference to that other part of Juſtice which we call,

2. *Commutative.* Take it in the Apoſtles words, *Rom.* 13. 7. *Render to all their dues.*

1. To your Superiours.
2. To your Equals.

Firſt to your Superiours: And that according to the command of Chriſt, *Matth.* 22. 21. *Render to Cæſar the things that are Cæſars*; or, as the Apoſtle proceeds in his direction, *Tribute to whom tribute is due, cuſtome to whom cuſtome, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.* Once more, 1 *Pet.* 2. 17. *Fear God, honour the King.*

Secondly, To thoſe that are upon a level with you, and are your equals, and neighbours. And

oh, that that golden rule were written upon your hearts, and made legible in your lives, which *Severus* the Emperour, was so taken with, that he caused it to be written in his Pallace, and elsewhere; 'tis this, *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*; What you would not have others do to you, do not you that to them; and the rather, because it was delivered by our Saviour, and stands upon record, in the affirmative, *Mat.* 7. 12. The extent whereof is this, That what we would have other men to think, speak, and do to us, with a rectified will, that we must think, speak, and do to them, and no worse. Wouldst thou have good weight, and full measure in buying? why, thou must give the same in selling. Wouldst thou have another faithful, in a trust committed to him, by thy self? why, that also may be justly expected from thee, whenever thou art trusted. Wouldst thou have another keep his word with thee? why, thou must be as careful to keep thine with others. Art thou unwilling, that others should wound thy name, blast thy credit, by reproaches, or bearing false witness against thee? why, then take heed of doing that to others; and give me leave to tell you, that were this Rule observed, our Vine would not be as the Vine of *Sodom*, nor our Grapes, the Grapes of Gall. Judgement would not spring up as Hemlock in the furrows of the field, nor righteousness be turned into wormwood, but we should be the habitation of righteousness, and the mountain of holiness; and yet, if any of you think this Rule too general, or too narrow, for you to walk by, take some other that may convey a

more

more particular light to you. That in *Levit.* 19. 35, 36. *Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgement, in mete yard, in weight, or in measure, just ballances, just weights, a just ephe, and a just hin, shall ye have.* And *Deut.* 25. 13. There is to the same purpose; I know, that a *caveat emptor* is a Salvo to the stupid and seared conscience of many a Seller; I, but the Apostle gives him another caveat, that he must observe, or else the other will not serve his turn. You have it, 1 *Thess.* 4. 6. *That no man go beyond, or defraud his brother in any matter, for the Lord is the avenger of all such.* It may be, the man whom thou defraudest in thy dealings with, is not able to right himself upon thee, and therefore must put up the wrong that thou hast done him; I, but God will not: No, he will avenge it, unless prevented by a timely repentance, in which, thou must not forget, to make restitution and satisfaction, according to thine ability.

Thus I have finished my discourse upon the first cardinal virtue. And therefore, briefly of the

2. *Viz.* Temperance, for so the original word ἐγκράτεια, is rendred here, by our *English* Translatours, as also, *Gal.* 5. 23. 2 *Pet.* 1. 6. And therefore (though I find it otherwise expressed, in divers forreign Translations) yet I shall not quit our own; and the rather, because I humbly conceive, that the design of the Apostle was not only to lop of a luxuriant branch of incontinency in his Auditor, but also to strike at the root, from whence that branch did sprout; and further, to implant a contrary fundamental virtue in him, that would produce better fruit; for (if I mistake

not, from hence ſprings chaſtity, righteouſneſs, moderation, clemency, ſelf-denial, meekneſs, ſobriety, and ſuch like. He that is temperate, is endued with all theſe virtues: For temperance is nothing elſe, but a kind of Lordſhip, which man exerciſeth over himſelf, ſubjecting himſelf, and all his paſſions and affections to right reaſon. When rectified reaſon is in power, and keeps the reins ſtreight in her hand; then the affections and paſſions become regular in their motions, and thoſe motionsmay paſs under the title of diſtinct vertues; but if ſo, what ſhall we call the oppoſite, and contrary motions of mans paſſions and affections, but ſo many diſtinct vices? at leaſt, give to every one the black title of Intemperance, even thoſe very *impetus primo primi*, the firſt riſings of original corruption, and the leaſt degree of luſt and will, that is not conform to the rule of right reaſon, and curb'd thereby, is ſinful and intemperate; not only, when the deſire is enlarged, as Hell; but alſo, when it is any wayes inordinate: However, I am certain, that none can, with any colour of reaſon, deny, but thoſe belluine, and beaſtly luſts of the fleſh, Drunkenneſs, Gluttony, Fornication, Adultery, and ſuch like, may very well paſs under the notion of intemperance: For as the actions of theſe do not at all conform to the rule of right reaſon; ſo they have the ſame names given to them (in Scripture) that the bruits have; for the truth is, they do unman themſelves; and as it is recorded of *Eli*'s ſons, They made themſelves vile and contemptible: Yea, ſo much the more vile, becauſe that they take ſo much care to ſatisfie their luſts;

lusts, and so little to save their immortal Souls. But oh, that we could weep over such, as one once did, when he saw an *Pambus.* Harlot dressing and trimming her self, with her comb, and her glass, upon a double consideration. First, because she took so much care to undo her Soul; and secondly, because he took so little care, in providing for his own. For this is an undoubted truth, and the Apostle tells us so much in the Text. That

2. There is a future judgement, a judgement to come; and this is the motive which the Apostle makes use of, both to dehort his Auditor from Vice, and also to press him to the practice of Virtue. And so I pass from explication, to Application.

I have already, according to my Text, presented you with a chequer table, and discovered the black of Vice, that all must shun and avoid, together with the white of Virtue, which all ought to pursue in their respective spheares and stations. All therefore, that the time will suffer me to do, is to hand out a coal from the Text, and to convey a quickning beam from the Sun of truth, that shines therein: 'Tis this, Be righteous in your Sphear, and temperate in your Spirits and actings; for there is a future Judgement, wherein God will call you to an account. 'Tis reported of *Augustus*, that he enforced all the *Roman* Knights, to give an account of their lives; sure I am, God will. *We must all* (saith the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 5. 10.) *appear before the judgement-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body.* Mark this,

we

we muſt all appear; for no man is either above, or paſt Judgement: No! They that ſit in Judgement upon others, muſt come to Judgement; And they that take an account, muſt give an account; and they that paſs the ſentence of Judgement upon others here, muſt receive a Sentence themſelves above; for with God, there is no reſpect of perſons in Judgement. All men, of what degree and rank ſoever, will be divided into two ſorts, Sheep and Goats; with a *venite benedicti*, to the one; and an *ite maledicti*, to the other. If the former be your Sentence, then you ſhall enter into your Maſters joy: but if the latter; then nothing but horrour, and trembling, weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth, in that lake, that burns with fire and brimſtone for ever. And therefore, I ſhall ſay to all here preſent, as the Apoſtle doth, 2 *Corinths* 5. 11. *Knowing the terrour of the Lord, we perſwade men, to flee from the wrath to come.* For neither Riches, nor Honours, nor Garments, No! nor Mountains, can ſhelter, or profit you in that day. Nothing but righteouſneſs, will deliver from death; and without queſtion, it was the apprehenſion and belief of this, that made guilty *Felix* tremble; or, as the *Syrian* hath it, fill'd him with fear: As the earth fill'd with vapours, trembles and quakes, ſo this made an earth quake in his conſcience; as the Hand-writing upon the wall, did in carouſing *Belſhazzars*; a ſign that Fear was in its height and reing. *The ſinners in Sion, are afraid* (ſaith the Prophet, *Eſay* 33. 14.) *fearfulneſs hath ſurprized the hypocrite;*

pocrite; and why ſo? *Who among us ſhall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings?* For I can aſſure you, that Hell is no painted Fire, nor like the crackling of thorns under a pot, that make a blaze, but is ſoon extinct: No! the element of Fire, is but a dark and ſhadowy reſemblance of Hell-fire. For, as it is far more tormenting, ſo it is everlaſting; and that adds to the miſery of that Soul, that muſt endure it. Oh, when the Soul muſt be alwayes ſuffering, and yet never ſatisfie; and alwayes dying, and yet never die; this muſt needs be intolerable. And therefore, I do moſt humbly beſeech all guilty perſons, to conſider this, and ſeriouſly to lay it to heart; that you may tremble ſo here, as not to tremble hereafter; and ſo to repent here, as you may not repent when it is too late. And in particular, give me leave, to make my addreſs to all you that are concern'd in the work of the day: And I do as earneſtly beg it of you, that no cauſe may be pleaded at either of the Bars here, but that which may have an Advocate in the Judgement to come; and that thoſe things, and nothing elſe, may be Preſented and Endicted, but what will be preſentable in the Judgement to come; and that if poſſible, no Bill may be found, but that which will be found to be a *Bills vera* in the Judgement to come: And that none of you do take an Oath, but that which will appear to have been taken in Truth, Judgement, and Righteouſneſs, in the Judgement to come: And laſt of all, that no Evidence be given, either in Civil, or Criminal cauſes, but ſuch as will

will have the teſtimony of a good Conſcience, in the Judgement to come: For elſe, even in this life; when a Lecture ſhall be read to you of Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and Judgement to come, you may be brought to tremble; for ſo was *Felix*: As you have it in the Text, *As S. Paul reaſoned of Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and Judgements to come,* Felix *trembled.*

FINIS.

THE MOST

Remarkable Man,

UPON EARTH;

Or, the true Portraicture

OF A

SAINT;

As to his Birth, Life, and Death: Delivered in a Sermon, at the Celebration of the Funeral of Mr. *Francis Bowtel*, of *Parham* in *High Suffolk*, Jan. 14. 1668.

By *Samuel Blackerby*, Miniſter of the Goſpel at *Stow Market*.

LONDON,
Printed for *Nevil Simons*, at the *Princes Arms* in S. *Paul's Church Yard*. 1674.

THE MOST

Remarkable Man,

UPON EARTH;

Or, the true Portraiture

OF

SAINT

Pſal. 37. 37. *Mark the Perfect man and behold the Upright: for the end of that man is peace.*

COſmographers divide the inhabitable world into ſundry, and many parts, and tell us, that of thoſe many, the feweſt are thoſe that own the Chriſtian Religion, or the name of a Chriſt: but alaſs! how few of theſe, are the men, we find in my Text, *perfect and upright men?* the heap of chaff, is far greater than the wheat; and the number of *Briſtol*, or pebbles ſtones, far greater then of Pearls and Diamonds. Chriſts flock is a very little, little flock (as the *Greek* expreſſeth it, *Luk.* 12. 32.) *Many are called, but few are choſen, Matth.* 20. 16. Caſt out the groſly ignorant, the practical Atheiſt, the debauched and prophane, ſuch as have made a covenant with death, and are at an agreement with hell, that can drink and whore, ſwear, and blaſpheme the Sacred Name of God, prophane his Sabbaths, contemn his Ordinances, caſt his Law behind their backs, and hate to be accounted ſe-

rious

rious in Religion, least they should bear the odious title of Phanaticks: I say, cast out all these walking dunghils, and monstrous miscreants; what a small number will be left behind, that have any colour, or appearance of reason to account themselves of the number of those that are deciphered and characterized in my Text? I, but then, cast out all hypocrites, such as have a name to live, and yet are dead; such as have the form of godliness, and yet deny the power thereof; such as have their lamps of profession, but are destitute of the oyl of saving grace: Why, then perhaps, you will be at a stand, and ready to say, we scarce know where to find these, heaven may be full of such, but the earth bears but a few of them, if any: *Herb-a-grace* is very scarce: and 'tis very true, such as these, are very rare: there are but a very, very few of perfect and upright ones; but where ever they are, they ought to be marked and observed; for so saith the *Psalmist* in my Text, *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.*

In which words we have two considerables.

1. A double duty enjoyned; *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright.*

2. A reason or motive to enforce the double duty; *For the end of that man is peace.*

First, Here is a double duty enjoyned; Wherein you have,

1. The Subject Matter, or Act.
2. The Object.

1. The Subject Matter or Act; *Mark and behold.*

2. The

To the truly Honoured

Barnaby Bowtel,

Of *Parham Haſia*, Eſq;

With Madam *MAGDALEN* his Lady,
Grace and Peace.

THe *preaching of the Sermon, which I here preſent you with, and the choice of the Text preached on, at the Funeral of Mr.* Francis Bowtel, *your deceaſed Father, were (as you inform me) his dying Requeſts, and conceived in his Breaſt ſome time before: But had the choice of the Preacher, and the Text been left to me, I ſhould have choſen a* Newcomen, *or an* Harris *for the Preacher*, And know you not that a great man is fallen this day in Iſrael, *for the Text.*

The Task was so much the harder, and more difficult for me to undertake, because confined to so little time, at so great a distance, in the depth of Winter, in a croud of Business, and also having never preached on the Text before. But verba morientis—— *his Desires were as Commands to me; and therefore since it was, as it was, I must humbly beg of you, to receive the Sermon as it is, without emendation or correction.*

The Reason why I refused to print it, when desired by one, or both of you, was; because then I was utterly averse to that work: but now being drawn thereunto, I cannot but account my self obliged to conjoyn this with some others, that I may lie no longer under the censure of Ingratitude, and also, that the memory of so worthy and remarkable a Person, may be revived and perpetuated.

I know, that Funeral Sermons, are (mostly) made but matters of form, and men come to them, as to a great Feast. The first course, wherein God is most concern'd, is lightly passed over: The second, wherein Man is represented, is (commonly) most expelled, and stood upon: but herein I was prevented, and 'tis like, did frustrate the expectation of my Auditors; partly, by rea-

son

ſon of my ſhort acquaintance with him; and partly, that I might not give an alarm to my own people at home, and provoke their Spirits to accuſe me of partiality in ſerving them up with the firſt, without the ſecond; even at the Funerals of ſome perſons of great worth, for true Piety and Godlineſs. And yet I hope without offence, I may take liberty to write that of him now, which I did not then ſpeak. As to his natural Pedigree, I ſhall not concern my ſelf, nor the Reader with it, for his ſpiritual is chiefly in mine eye, as that which ſpeaks him to be one of the remarkable men in the Text, whilſt living, and dying; for thoſe that knew him better then my ſelf, cannot but ſay this of him, that he was a Perfect and an Upright man. He had the external form of Godlineſs, and a name to live: for, as he was a conſtant attendant upon publick Ordinances of Divine Worſhip, where he could enjoy them, and whilſt in health and ſtrength; ſo his Geſture and Behaviour therein was reverent and decent, ſuited to their nature and kind. His Speech was ſeaſoned with Salt, that it might adminiſter Grace to the Hearer. Yea, (as I have been informed) when he went forth to take an overſight of Servants and Day-Labourers, or when he met with poor people

in his way, he would be ſpeaking to them of the things of God, and that which concerned their eternal peace; A rare Practice in a Gentleman. As to the Education of his Children, and bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, I hope, that the ſobriety, temperance, and gracefulneſs of yours (Dear Sir) and your Siſters Lives, are the genuine fruits thereof; and yet this is not all. For to the outward form (without queſtion) there was the inward power. He was nobly deſcended, being born again, not of Bloud, nor of the will of the Fleſh, nor of the will of Man, but of God: Yea, ſtampt with the Divine Image, made partaker of the Divine Nature, and richly adorned, and beautified with the gifts and graces of Gods holy Spirit: So that he did not act meerly from external motives, but from internal principles, that could not be hid; and hence it was, that he was filled with the fruits of Righteouſneſs, and like a Tree planted by the Rivers of water, bringing forth his fruit in due ſeaſon: Or rather a Tree planted in the Houſe of the Lord, and flouriſhing in the Courts of our God, ſtill bringing forth fruit in old age, ſo that his Gray Hairs were a Crown of Glory to him, being found in the way of Righteouſneſs. He

He lived about ninety ſix years a natural life, began the very day of his Death in Sabbath-work, and finiſhed the work of his Natural Life with the ending of the day, and ſo went to his eternal reſt, in the boſom of his dear Jeſus; he lay down, and ſlept in the Lord. But, as he did not live (though he lived long) undeſired, ſo he did not dye unlamented; witneſs the Throng and Concourſe of ſerious Chriſtians, that accompanied his Corps to the Church, where his Body was interr'd, and laid to reſt, (and that in ſharp weather, in a bitter Evening) with a ſilent and grave deportment, as true Spiritual Mournerrs are wont to do, at the Funeral of ſome eminent and remarkable man. Leves loquuntur, ingentes ſtupent——

Honoured, *My deſign is not to renew your grief, on the one hand, nor to flatter you on the other, but to be your Remembrancer, and to put you in mind of thoſe things which you know, and are well aſſured of, being Eye, and Ear-witneſſes thereof, that you may be ſtirred up to make a right uſe of his holy Example and Copy, which he left behind him, and with you in particular, to imitate and write after. So ſhall you approve your ſelves to be of the number of the remarkable*

ones on the Earth, and your End shall be in Peace. I have nothing more to add, but that I am

Your very humble

Servant,

Samuel Blackerby.

Stow-Market, December. 2. 1673.

Psal.

Pſal. 37. 37. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.*

COſmographers divide the inhabitable World into ſundry, and many parts, and tell us, that of thoſe many, the feweſt are thoſe that own the Chriſtian Religion, or the name of a Chriſt: but alas! how few of theſe, are the men, we find in my Text, *perfect and upright men?* the heap of Chaff, is far greater than the Wheat; and the number of *Briſtol*, or Pebble ſtones, far greater then of Pearls and Diamonds. Chriſts flock is a very little, little flock (as the Greek expreſſeth it, *Luke* 12. 32.) *Many are called, but few are choſen, Matth.* 20. 16. Caſt out the groſly ignorant, the practical Atheiſt, the debauched and prophane, ſuch as have made a covenant with Death, and are at an agreement with Hell, that can drink and whore, ſwear, and blaſpheme the Sacred Name of God, prophane his Sabbaths, contemn his Ordinances, caſt his Law behind their backs, and hate to be accounted ſe-

rious in Religion, least they should bear the odious title of Phanaticks: I say, cast out all these walking dunghils, and monstrous miscreants; what a small number will be left behind; that have any colour, or appearance of reason to account themselves of the number of those that are deciphered and characterized in my Text? I, but then, cast out all hypocrites, such as have a name to live, and yet are dead; such as have the form of godlines, and yet deny the power thereof; such as have their lamps of profession, but are destitute of the oyl of saving grace: Why, then perhaps, you will be at a stand, and ready to say, we scarce know where to find these, heaven may be full of such, but the earth bears but a few of them if any: *Herb-a grace* is very scarce: and 'tis very true, such as these, are very rare: there are but a very, very few of perfect and upright ones; but where ever they are, they ought to be marked and observed; for so saith the *Psalmist* in my Text, *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.*

In which words we have two considerables.

1. A double duty enjoyned; *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright.*

2. A reason or motive to enforce the double duty; *For the end of that man is peace.*

First, Here is a double duty enjoyned; Wherein you have,

1. The Subject Matter, or Act.
2. The Object.

1. The Subject Matter or Act; *Mark and behold.*

2. The

2. The Object; *The perfect man, and the upright.*

First, Here is the Subject Matter or Act.

1. *To Mark.*
2. *To Behold.*

1. *To Mark*; The *Hebrew* word (*Shamar*) in its Primitive ſignification, ſignifies to keep or preſerve one from danger; And therefore, a Noun, coming from this Verb, ſignifies a watch-tower, a place to deſcry a danger for prevention of it: Now becauſe it is the duty of a watch-man, that is ſet in a watch-tower, to obſerve all commers and goers, enemies as well as friends; I, and to be very diligent and accurate in his obſervation of them: Therefore I conceive, the Holy Ghoſt is pleaſed to make uſe of this word, here in our Text; For ſuch a kind of obſervation we ought to make of the perfect, and upright man, that a watchman ſhould, of all commers and goers near the watch-tower. We ſhould be very accute herein, as of a matter of great concern; a ſlight thought of him is not ſufficient. No! we ſhould take ſpecial notice of him, as a perſon moſt remarkable; *mark the perfect man.*

2. As we ſhould mark him, ſo we muſt behold him; *Mark and Behold*; The latter word imports more then the former; For, in the *Hebrew* Language it ſignifies, ſometimes, to behold an object with pleaſure, delight, and admiration; as perſons exceedingly taken, and taken up with the object; and ſo here, for there are many that will very accutely and exactly *Mark and obſerve the perfect and upright man*; I, and watch him too, in all his motions and actings, as far as they can: I, but they watch

watch and observe him with an evil eye; Not with any pleasure or delight in him; Not with an eye of approbation, but with an eye of reprobation; Not with an eye of admiration, but with an eye of detestation; not with an eye of imitation, but with an eye of malediction; unless he chance to trip and stumble in his way; and then, they make no better use of it, then this: they that were careless and remiss before, in observing, and beholding themselves in reference to their own sinful ways, grow more careless and remiss after, until they become past recovery, and eternally wrapt up in misery, unless grace prevents. Such watchmen there are in the world, but they do not observe the watchword in the Text; for that is of another import: and certainly it must needs be great injustice, to fix an evil eye upon one, whom the holy Ghost is pleased to set forth, under two glorious and admirable titles, as are expressed in the Text. The object is no contemptible object: but a rare and soul taking object. The Holy Ghost doth not set thee to feed thy eye, and thy soul with a meer shadow, a low and empty thing: but with that which may afford thee a due, and fit object of soul-contemplation.

1. The perfect man.
2. The upright man.

Two inseperable companions in one Subject: for no man is perfect, but he that is upright, and no man upright but he that is perfect, in a Gospel sense: And therefore, I find the same word, that is rendered here, perfect, in other texts is translated upright; And so *Gen.* 17. 1. *Walk before me and be thou perfect*, or, as in the Margin, *be thou upright*; for

for as uprightneſs, and ſincerity, is Goſpel perfection; ſo they always go together. And yet, when we have both the expreſſions, in one text, as here, we muſt diſtinguiſh the ſenſe: for it is not a tautologie: And therefore, ſaith a Divine of ours, the former may be taken for inward ſoundneſs, the latter for outward juſtice and equity, reſpecting a mans dealings in the world, or in two words, a perfect man, is a plain hearted man; and an upright man, is a plain dealing man: in the one, you may mark, and behold, the holineſs and grace of his heart, in the other, the holineſs of his life; and both are to be marked and beheld, with much accuteneſs of obſervation, joyned with admiration and delight.

Object. But ſome will ſay, is this a truth, that any man is perfect in this life, doth not S. *Paul*, an eminent Saint and ſervant of God deny perfection, *Phil.* 3. *Not as though I were already perfect?*

Anſw. By a diſtinction.

There is a twofold perfection,

1. A Perfection of Juſtification.

2. A Perfection of Sanctification.

1. A Perfection of Juſtification: and in this reſpect all true believers are compleatly perfect, *i. e.* They are perfectly juſtified: So *Heb.* 10. 14. *By one offering he* (*i. e.* Chriſt) *hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified.* And *Col.* 2. 10. *And ye are compleat in him.* 'Tis true in themſelves they are incompleat and imperfect: but in Chriſt they are compleat and perfect: in themſelves ſinners, but in Chriſt righteous. For as a man looking upon an object with a pair of coloured Spectacles, takes the object to be of the ſame colour; So God looking upon perſons

persons through Christ, who is righteous, looks upon them, as righteous, their sin is charg'd upon him; and his righteousnes is imputed unto them: So saith the Apostle, 2 *Cor.*5.21. *He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousnes of God in him.* So that God looks not upon a true believer, as a sinner, but as righteous, for he looks upon him, in him, that for his sake, was made a sinner, not by inhæsion or transgression, but by imputation.

2. There is a perfection of Sanctification, and this is twofold,

1. A Perfection in respect of Parts.
2. A Perfection in respect of Degrees.

As a child that hath all the parts of a man, may be said to be a perfect child, although it be not grown up to the age, and stature of a man: So a Child of God, that hath all the saving and sanctifying graces of Gods Spirit, and the lines of his image drawn upon him, may be said to be perfect, although he is not yet come to his full age, and growth in grace; such a one is fundamentally perfect, although he is not complementally perfect; grace is glory inchoate, and glory is grace consummate; As soon as ever a man becomes a new man, he is a young glory, although he be not complementally glorious: yea, he is such a glory, and so perfect in glory, at the first, that he is worthy of our due observation; and a fit object of contemplation with great delight, and admiration. *Mark the perfect man and behold the upright*: observe him accurately, and throughly; yea, fix the eye of your souls upon him intensly, and with the greatest delight, pleasure, and admiration, that you can.

Thus I have opened the first part of my text,

and

and ſhall reſolve it into this propoſition.

That a perfect and upright man, is a remarkable man, worthy of a delightful contemplation; or thus, a godly man is a taking object; there is much in him to take the heart, and feed the eyes of men with delight, and pleaſure. And indeed, next to God, Chriſt, and the Holy Spirit, he is the moſt taking the moſt delightful object: the whole world affords not the like: in that reſpect, he is a none ſuch. I, what though he be never ſo poor in the world, that he hath ſcarce a rag to cover his nakedneſs, or a piece of bread to put into his mouth, or an houſe to put his head in: yet for all this, he is a taking object; for I may ſay of him, as our Saviour of the Lillies, *that* Solomon, *in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of theſe.* So the greateſt perſon upon the earth, in all his outward glory and ſplendour, if he be deſtitute of true grace, is not cloathed as one of theſe; all his beauty is but deformity: his greatneſs but meanneſs, & his riches but poverty; the righteous, ſaith *Solomon, is more excellent then his neighbor.* I, though the neighbor be never ſo great in the world? 'tis grace that renders a man truly excellent, and truly honourable. For,

1. Look upon him as to his pedigree and birth, and ſee from whence he came, and you muſt needs take him for a great and noble perſonage; So *John* 1.13. *born not of blood* (or, as in the Original, *not of bloods*) *nor of the will of man, but of God.* Many men boaſt, and brag much of their parentage, and the family or houſe they came out of. Such a Duke, ſuch a Lord, ſuch a great perſon was their Father, or Grandfather, and ſuch a great perſon is their brother, or their uncle or near allies. But alas, what is this

this to a mans being born from above, to come out of the family of heaven, to have God for thy Father, and Christ for thy Brother, and near ally? the other is not to be named with this. No, were thy earthly parents beggars from door to door, and thou born naturally upon a dunghil, yet if thou haſt God for thy Spiritual Father, thou art more nobly deſcended, then all the great ones in the world, if they are not born from above, as well as from beneath. I tell thee thy relation ſpeaks thee noble and honorable.

2. Look upon him as to his education and breeding, and ſee how he is diſciplined and trained up, and you muſt needs be taken therewith. He is remarkable for that there are many that will boaſt of their breeding, if not of their birth; And indeed, there is as much to be conſidered in that, if not more, then in the other. And therefore *Alexander* the Great, thought himſelf as much bound to his Tutor, as to his Father; becauſe the one gave him his being, but the other his well-being; the one was the inſtrument of life, and the other fitted him to live in the world. Why Beloved, a godly man hath not only the beſt birth, but the beſt breeding, for as he is born of God, ſo he is taught of God. Whoever is the uſher or ſub-tutor, God is the Maſter-teacher; So *John* 6. 45. It is written in the Prophets; *And they ſhall be all taught of God*; And 1 *Theſ.* 4. 9. *Ye are taught of God to love one another.* Now if God undertakes the work, it muſt needs be admirably well done; thoſe muſt needs be well taught, that have God for their teacher; for as he teacheth men the beſt things that can be taught, and learnt: ſo he teacheth them in the beſt way that can be uſed; not only in the beſt method,

but

but also with the greatest efficacy and power; he makes them such, as he teacheth them to be; and causeth them to do that, which he teacheth them to do: And in all, enricheth and ennobleth the minds and spirits of his Disciples, with such kind of learning and knowledge, as is not to be found in the whole world; he makes them all experimental Scholars in the great and profound mysteries of Heaven: So that there is not one in all the world, that can be a match for the meanest Scholar in his School: No, take a man that with *Berengarius*, is able almost to dispute *de omni scibili*, or with *Solomon*, to unravel Nature, from the Cedar to the Hyssop; yet a poor Soul, in the lowest form in Gods School, that is taught of him, is able to baffle, and to confound such an one, if once they come to engage in the matters of Heaven. 'Tis very true, Beloved, Humane Learning ought not to be despised; Humane Arts and Sciences are brave ornaments to the mind, and are very useful in many respects: I, but not to be compared with divine and heavenly light and knowledge. If Humane Learning be as the Ring, Divine Learning is as the Pearl or Diamond in the Ring; and far exceeds it in worth and excellency.

3. Look upon him as to the complexion of his Soul, and the air of his Countenance. And indeed, as a man may read much of the complexion of another mans Soul in the air of his Countenance; so did *Jacob* in *Laban's*, which put him to the flight: So there is much glory, and beauty in the Soul and Countenance of a godly man. *Solomon* saith, *Wisdom makes the face to shine*; how much more doth it make the Soul to shine, for that is

the

the seat thereof. Mark that of the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image.* Now if there be beauty and glory in the Original, there must needs be beauty and glory in the Copy; else the Copy will not be any wayes answerable to the Original. And therefore, saith Christ to his Church, *Cant.* 2. 14. *Let me hear thy voice, and see thy countenance, for pleasant is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.* Yea, he is so taken therewith, that it puts him, as it were into a rapture, it ravisheth his Soul, or takes away his Heart, as the *Hebrew* signifies, *Cant.* 4. 9. And indeed a gracious Soul, is a lovely and amiable Soul; the greatest beauty in the world. She stands not in need of a black patch, to set her off, or to commend her to others.

4. Look upon a godly man, as to his life and conversation, and you must needs say, that he is very remarkable; for he is one, that walks with God, in the way of God, even in that way, that leads to the fullest fruition, and enjoyment of God: Nay, he is one, that lives the life that God lives, in some measure; for he lives a life of holiness, and that is the life that God lives. 'Tis true, he lives on the Earth, but his conversation is in Heaven, where his God and his Treasure is: Yea, 'tis true, he lives in Flesh, but not after the Flesh; for whilst he lives in Flesh, he lives in the Spirit, and walks in the Spirit; and so turns the life of Nature, into a life of Grace. Now the more excellent the life of any being is, the more remarkable and admirable is that being. What is it, that renders an Angel so admirable, but because he lives an Angelical life. And what is it, that advanceth a

man

man above a beast, but because he lives a better life, then a beast doth. I speak now, of men that live like men, and not like bruits; and so, that advanceth a godly man, above all other men; because he lives a better life then others do. The life of Reason, is better then the life of Sense; but the life of Grace and Religion is far better then the life of Reason. Had I but time to set it forth in some particular instances, this demonstration would carry a strong conviction with it, into the hearts of any unbyassed hearers, and cause them to confess, that none upon the face of the earth, live such honourable and noble lives as Saints do. Holiness of life is a conformity to the most noble and honourable Rule, even the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. Holiness of life, is a conformity to the most noble and honourable pattern. Holiness of life is the power and virtue of Christ, expressed to the life; 'tis the Divine nature manifested in Humane flesh, 'tis the Spirit of God, breathing through corporal acts. Holiness of life, is the admiration of Angels, the joy and delight of the eternal God: (he taketh pleasure in his Saints) and therefore must needs be a taking object; 'tis very true, 'tis a great Paradox and Riddle to the men of the world: For it is simplicity, without foolery; 'tis gravity, without moroseness; 'tis humility, without will-worship; 'tis singularity, without affectation; 'tis reservedness, without narrowness and streightness of spirit; 'tis an holy freedom and liberty, without licentiousness; meekness, without cowardize; stoutness and valour of Spirit, without pride and cruelty; patient for God, but impatient against sin; a sufferer in its

own cauſe, but a warriour in Chriſts; a death unto ſin and the world, but a new life unto righteouſneſs, and unto God. The man dies to all things here below, that are ſinful, vain and tranſitory, and lives unto things above: Nay, which is the moſt to be admired in him, is this; that a Saints life is not only croſs, and contrary to the life and converſation of wicked and ungodly men; but ever when others are worſt, then he labours to be beſt. Thee have I ſeen righteous, ſaith God to *Noah*; I, the worſe they grow, the better he labours to be; like the glow-worm, that ſhines brighteſt in a dark night. Then *Daniel* opened his window, when Prayer to the true God, was decried, and by the moſt reſtrained. Then did *Elijah* plead for God, when almoſt the whole Nation were for *Baal*, and *Baals* Prophets were 450; here was great odds between them, and yet the Prophets holy zeal carried him through his undertaking, until he ſaw a good ſucceſs thereof. Holineſs of heart and life, hath ever carried away the Bell, and Crown at laſt: And therefore, well might the Pſalmiſt ſay in our Text, *Marke the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.* The end of his actings, and the end of his life is peace. And that leads me to a

5. Demonſtration of the excellency and admirableneſs of a godly man, and is the ſecond part of the Text, *viz.* The motive or argument, wherewith the Pſalmiſt preſſeth and urgeth his exhortation and holy injunction. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.* The *finis cui*, the end for which he is ſet, is for Peace. And the *finis cujus*, his end and winding

ing up is Peace. *Arias Montanus* renders it; *The last to the man is peace.* 'Tis true, he meets with many a bruſh by the way; in the world, Saints ſhall have trouble on every ſide: none meets with ſo many, all winds blow croſs to him, at one time or another. Sin, Satan, and the World; he is their But and Mark, at which they level all their poiſonous, and deadly Arrows. If an Heathen could ſay, *Nos fuimus Troes, agitamur ventis.* What may not a Saint ſay in this reſpect: Surely as the Prophet, *Eſay* 54. 12. *I am afflicted, toſſed with a tempeſt, and not comforted:* Or as the Apoſtle St. *Paul, Without were fightings, within were fears:* Or as the Church, *Pſal.* 128. 3. *The plowers plowed upon my back, they made long their furrows.* I, but ſtill mark and behold him in all this, look not only to his ſetting out, but to his Journeys end; for though he ſails through rough and rugged waves, and is oft in danger of ſplitting upon Soul-ruining Rocks, or ſticking in the Sands; yet at laſt he arrives at the Haven of Reſt: *The end of that man is peace.* And it muſt needs be ſo; for as Chriſt hath forewarn'd him of the one, ſo he hath aſſured him of the other, *John* 16. 33. *In the world you ſhall have trouble, but in me ye ſhall have peace.* If they han't it, in this life; yet they ſhall not miſs of it, in the life to come: *The end of thoſe men is peace.* The beſt Wine is reſerved for the laſt, and the Crown for the Conqueſt. 'Tis very true, that Grace is given to men here in this life, or elſe 'tis never given: I, but 'tis as true, that if Peace be denied to a gracious Soul in this life; yet it ſhall not be denied to her, in the life to come, *Eſay* 32. 17. Though the Soul ſows in tears, all the

time of her abode in the body; yet she shall reap in joy, when she hath got her freedom from that prison. Below she may haply spend her daies in mourning; but above, she shall spend an eternity in singing and rejoycing. Here she mourns, and sighs, and cries, because she is no better; but there she shall rejoyce and sing, because she is so well: And indeed, the word *Peace*, is of large extent; it comprehends all the desires of the Soul of man, even felicity and happiness to the utmost: And therefore the ancient Salutation of the Jews, was Peace; for that is the most desirable thing. Heaven would be no Heaven, if there were no Peace enjoyable there: And Hell would be no Hell, if Peace were enjoyable there. Give a man true and solid Peace, and you give him Heaven; take Peace from him, and he is in Hell. Holiness and Wickedness, divides the World; and Peace and Trouble, divides the states of men in the world. To the wicked God saith, *There is no Peace*; to the godly he saith, *The end is Peace*. For,

1. Then he is above all danger; above the power of Sin, the malice of Men, and the rage of Hell. He hath nothing to trouble, or disquiet him; no temptations from without, nor from within; he is now sinless, and therefore sorrowless. A godly man goes free into Heaven, and there enjoyes the utmost freedom.

2. Then he is at his Center, and there enjoyes Rest, and therefore Peace; God is the proper Center of the Soul. And therefore (as the ancient Father hath it) we are not at rest, until we come to God. I, but when we come to God, then we are at rest, for then we are in our proper Sphear. *In*

thy

thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore. I, joy without sorrow, and pleasure without pain; I, and such a fulness, as puts an end to all anxious and painful desires; for in God the Soul enjoyes full, and perfect satisfaction, without any glut. *When I awake* (saith the Psalmist) *I shall be satisfied with thy likeness.* And when the Appetite is satisfied, and the Belly filled, we say, the Bones are at rest. Sure I am, when the Soul is full, she is at rest; here she is in motion, travelling from Duty, to Duty; and from Ordinance, to Ordinance; and from Scripture, to Scripture; and all to get something of God whom she loves, and after whom she breaths: but in Heaven, she is at rest, for there she is filled with all the fulness of God: God is the All, of a gracious Soul here, and there he will be all in all to her, and all in her: The lines of his glory will be compleatly drawn upon her then, and she swallowed up in divine embraces, without the least interruption. Alas, Sirs, here you have but a taste; but there a Saint shall swim in the Ocean of divine goodness and love. This, this is the great end of a perfect and upright man; who is born of God, taught of God, beautified by the indwelling of God, and raised up by the power of the Divine Spirit, to a most admirable converse with, and conformity to the life of God; *The end of that man is peace.* As soon as ever he enters into the Mansion of Glory, he enters into Peace. (As you have it, *Esay* 57. 2.) And all the time he lodgeth there, he dwells in peace: For though the end of that man is Peace, yet the Peace of that man shall never end; the Crown of Life, is a never-fading Crown;

Crown; not a Crown of Gold, but of Glory: The Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom.

Now, Beloved, put all these things together, and see if a perfect and upright man, be not a remarkable man, and worthy of your observation, and delightful contemplation? The truth is, he is oft the worlds wonder; I, but 'tis very certain, he is a person of whom the world is not worthy. As you have it, *Heb.* 11. 38. Not that he hath any worth in, and from himself; no, in himself he hath nothing that is good. *In my flesh* (saith *Paul*) *there dwells no good.* But as he lives from God, and lives in God, and receives communications from him, he is an admirable piece, next to the man Christ Jesus, he is the Master-piece of Divine Love and Grace. Oh, where is the person so blind, so sottish and mad, as will not be taken with such a man! for so are all those, that are not taken with him; but why should we wonder at this? when as there are so many that take little or no notice of God, so few that fix their eyes upon their maker, so few that love him, or take any delight in him. If the Original be slighted, no wonder if the Copy be: The Panther bears an implacable enmity and hatred against Man, and therefore can't endure the picture of a man; and so here, Men by nature are enemies to God, and therefore they hate his Image where ever it appears.

Application. But O Sirs, let me beg of you, that you will not be of that number: No, but let your hearts fall under the power of this Divine Truth in the Text. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright.*

I know that unregenerate men ought to be marked and obſerved: But how,

1. That we may reprove them, according as occaſion offered.

2. That we may pity and commiſerate their loſt and undone eſtate.

3. That we may be ſtirred up to pray for them, and commend their condition to God.

4. That we may admire free Grace, that makes the difference.

I, but though we ſhould mark, and behold the wicked; yet not as we ſhould mark and behold the godly: No, we ſhould mark the latter. So as

1. To admire God in him; for what is the perfection and uprightneſs of any man, but God in the man, working and framing him to ſuch a gracious temper in his heart and life? I tell you, if you do admire the goodneſs and grace of any man, and do not at that time, look upon God as the fountain and efficient thereof, you do but ſet up an Idol: No, God is the all, and the do-all in the man; and therefore he, and he alone is to be admired. Oh, when you ſee the man in the Text, ſay, God is in the man; and therefore I am taken with him.

2. To mark and obſerve him ſo, as to imitate him, as far as he is imitable. So ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 11. 1. *Be ye followers of me, even as I am alſo of Chriſt.* I know that the beſt of men in themſelves, and left to themſelves, are but men; and therefore not to be followed in all things, at all times. *David, Solomon,* &c. are not to be imitated in all things; I, but ſo far as their acting, and behaviour ſpeaks forth God in them, they are

to

to be marked for our imitation, and Copy, after which we ſhould write; For you can never be like him in his end, unleſs you be ſomewhat like him in his beginning and progreſs. You muſt not only deſire with *Balaam*, that you may die the death of the righteous, but you muſt alſo live the life the righteous; you muſt be perfect and upright ones, or elſe your end will not be Peace. This eternal Crown will not be ſet upon any mans head, but upon his that hath run the race of Goſpel-perfection and uprightneſs, and finiſhed his courſe; doth not only begin, but holds out to the laſt: For the Text tells us, that 'tis he, and he only, whoſe end and laſt, or winding up, ſhall be Peace. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is Peace.*

FINIS.